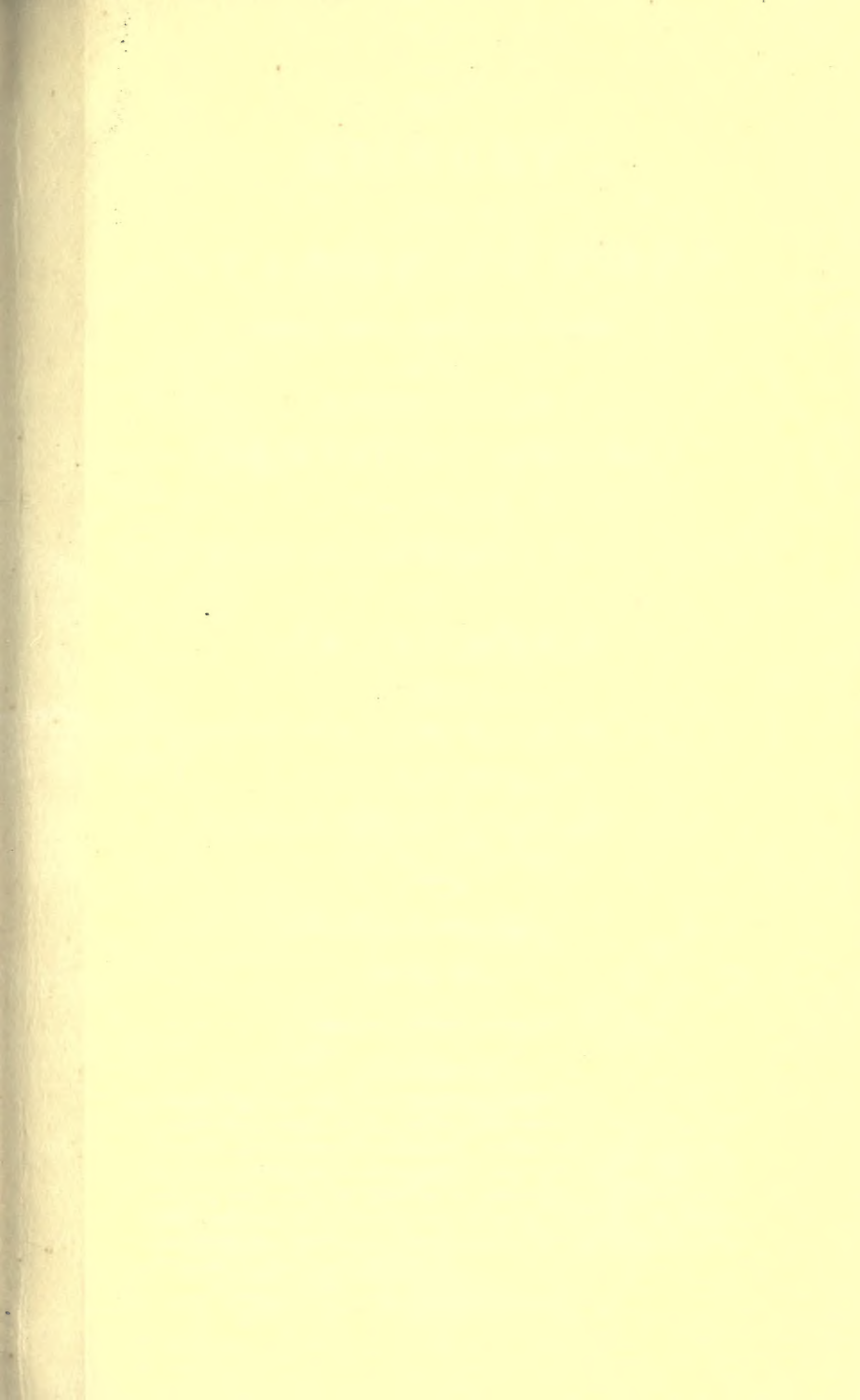




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THE

HISTORY  
OF  
ANCIENT EUROPE,  
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO THE  
SUBVERSION OF  
THE WESTERN EMPIRE;

WITH A SURVEY OF  
THE MOST IMPORTANT REVOLUTIONS  
IN  
ASIA AND AFRICA;

IN A SERIES OF  
LETTERS FROM A GENTLEMAN TO HIS SON:

INTENDED AS AN ACCOMPANIMENT TO

DR. RUSSELL'S HISTORY OF MODERN EUROPE.

[by William Russell]

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
ANCIENT EUROPE.

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PART III.

FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AUGUSTUS CÆSAR IN THE  
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EMPIRE, AND THE CONSEQUENT FORMATION OF NEW KING-  
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LETTER I.

*History of the Reign of AUGUSTUS, to the complete Establish-  
ment of his Power.*

MY DEAR SON,

WHEN luxury and vice had degraded the character of the Romans, and gradually undermined the foundations of their public spirit and private virtue,—when patriotism became an empty name, and integrity, honor, and morality, were more ridiculed than regarded,—an opportunity was offered to an ambitious, politic, and artful citizen, for the usurpation of the supreme power. While the ancient character subsisted, the want of a due balance between the patricians and plebeians did not produce that mischievous effect which the same deficiency afterward occasioned. The prevalent regard for the dignity and welfare of the country long prevented the contests of the two parties

from being carried to a ruinous or sanguinary extremity ; but, in an age of degeneracy, faction and selfishness repressed the influence of correct and honorable feelings ; and multitudes were as ready as rival leaders to contend for power and pre-eminence. Julius Cæsar, taking advantage of this state of affairs, waded through torrents of blood to that sovereignty which the constitution denied him, and not only subverted the power of the senate, but annihilated even that circumscribed portion of liberty which the aristocratic leaders had left to the people. Octavius, with equal zeal and greater judgement, pursued a similar course ; and, when he had triumphed over his powerful but impolitic competitor, he enjoyed a long reign in dignified security.

Ante Chr.  
30.

When the conqueror had tranquillised Egypt, and reduced it to a provincial form, he consigned the administration to Cornelius Gallus, whose character and connexions did not excite his jealousy. He then repaired to the Syrian territory ; and, having regulated the affairs of that province, he quietly passed the winter in different towns of Asia Minor, attending with diligence to the concerns of policy, and transmitting occasional instructions to Rome.

In his absence from Italy, the senate had voted such honors as his great success seemed to deserve, if either party, in a contest of ambition, could be thought to be entitled to any marks of honor from the legitimate rulers of the state. Triumphal arches were erected ; games were ordered to be solemnised in every fifth year ; and the anniversary of his birth was declared a holiday, as well as that day on which the intelligence of his naval victory reached Rome. It was also decreed, that, on his approach to the city, the Vestal virgins, the senate, and people, should meet and congratulate him. The priests were directed to pray for his safety ; and libations, both on public occasions and in private entertainments, were ordered to be

offered to his honor. He was not openly declared a God by the senate; but the next rank was assigned to him. He would not, indeed, suffer the Roman citizens to treat him entirely as a Deity: yet he permitted the provincials in Asia Minor to erect temples in his name<sup>1</sup>.

As he did not apprehend any farther competition after his splendid success over Antony, he was not particularly eager to return to Rome. He lingered at Samos, Ante Chr and passed slowly through Greece. At length <sup>29.</sup> he gladdened his Italian subjects with his auspicious presence, and enjoyed the parade of three triumphs; one for his exploits in Pannonia and Dalmatia, the second for the battle of Actium, the third for the conquest of Egypt. To Carinas, who had suppressed a revolt in Gaul, and had chastised the Suevi for presuming to cross the Rhine into his province, a triumph was at the same time allowed. So great was the amount of the wealth brought from Egypt, consisting (among other valuable spoils) of the treasures of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, that the interest of money was reduced by two-thirds, and the value of land proportionally augmented; and Octavius not only defrayed all his debts, while he remitted the arrears due to the treasury, but liberally rewarded the services of the soldiery and the zealous attachment of the citizens<sup>2</sup>.

These triumphs were witnessed by the people with unusual joy and satisfaction, because they indicated the termination of that contest which had long checked the course of public prosperity, and greatly diminished private happiness. No leader seemed likely to arise, who would renew by his pestilent ambition the scenes of unnatural animosity and civil slaughter; and it was fondly hoped, that the prudence and policy of the sole sovereign of the empire would be systematically employed in securing

<sup>1</sup> Di. Cass. lib. li. cap. 7, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Sueton. Vit. Augusti, cap. 41.—Di. Cass.



continued peace, and in promoting the welfare of every class of the community.

A mal-content of some distinction had made an attempt to excite commotions, to the prejudice of the victorious prince, before his return to Rome. The younger Lepidus, offended at the removal of his father from power, and not pleased at the ruin of his uncle Brutus or of his father-in-law Antony, conspired with other disaffected citizens against the life of Octavius: but the vigor of Mæcenas baffled the dangerous scheme, and the aspiring youth fell a victim to his rashness<sup>3</sup>.

This conspiracy, being so transient, could not be said to disturb the tranquillity of the empire; and, for some years, no other domestic foe presumed to risque seditious machinations. But some foreign enemies, about this time, employed the Roman arms, and exercised the courage of the proconsul Licinius Crassus. The Basternæ having invaded the territories of a Thracian prince, an ally of Rome, Crassus advanced against them, and drove them from the country by mere terror. After a pursuit of the fugitives, who had sent deputies to remonstrate against his conduct, he drew from these envoys, in a moment of intoxication, such intelligence as promoted his views. He suddenly attacked the barbarian king in a wood, slew him, and totally routed his army. This success encouraged him to invade that part of Mæsia which the Basternæ had subdued; and, either by persuasion or by violence, he procured the submission of many towns and fortresses. He afterward routed another Basternian army, and dictated terms of peace to the vanquished nation. Turning his arms against the Thracians, who had molested his troops in their return from Mæsia, he conquered some of their communities. A part of the Getic nation also felt

3 Liv. Epit. lib. cxxxiii.—Paterc. lib. ii. cap. 88.

the vigor of his arms : and, for these exploits, he received the honor of a triumph<sup>4</sup>.

That Octavius was now so fully satiated with glory, and, after restoring peace to the state, had become so moderate and unambitious, as to wish for the repose and security of private life, under the auspices of republican rulers, cannot be readily believed ; for, if he had been sincerely inclined to relinquish his power, he might easily have accomplished his resolution. It is affirmed, however, that he entertained such a thought<sup>5</sup>, and had a private conference with Agrippa and Mæcenas on that very interesting subject. He requested those able ministers to give him their free and disinterested advice, and to treat him as a fellow-citizen and an equal, rather than as a sovereign.

Agrippa first delivered his opinion. Nature, he said, pointed out the propriety of conducting the affairs of government on a basis of equality, as far as could be consistent with order and tranquillity. Those who belonged to the same nation, who were educated in the same mode, subject to the same laws, seemed to have an equal right to a share in the government. The elevation of an individual above the rest of the community, for the purpose of general administration, was apparently an encroachment upon the rights of others, and must therefore be highly offensive to the spirit of freemen. To undergo the fatigues of labor, bear the burthen of taxation, and incur personal danger in the defence of the country, while the advantages and conveniences and enjoyments were principally in the hands of one, would necessarily be a source of unpleasing reflexion, and the cause of a depression of spirit. Undoubtedly, no state could subsist without magistrates : but a share of the administration ought to be within the reach of every one who was not disabled by

<sup>4</sup> Di. Cass. lib. li. cap. ult.

<sup>5</sup> Sueton. cap. 28.—Di. Cass. lib. lii.

folly or wickedness. Men would cheerfully submit to the sway of others, when they knew that it might soon be their own turn to govern ; and those who were in power would be less disposed to exercise it with tyranny, when they were aware that it would soon be transferred to other hands. The burthens imposed under such a government would rarely excite a murmur, because they would be fairly proportioned, and adjusted without irregularity or caprice. Honors, instead of being procured by a mean compliance with the inclinations of a prince, would be generally earned by merit and virtue, and would give rise to a laudable emulation, rather than to envy and intrigue. The prosperity of the state would be felt by every one, and, on the other hand, adverse fortune would in some measure lose it's sting, by being universally shared. Far different, he said, would be the effects of a despotic government. He did not mean to insinuate, that his esteemed patron would act the part of a tyrant : but monarchical sway, he thought, was by no means so desirable as a republican administration. The zeal of patriotism could not be so strong, while one citizen had the chief power : offices and employments would not be undertaken with alacrity, or executed with diligence : the love of gain would be more operative than public spirit in the minds of those whom the prince might call into his service ; and pleasure would be more followed than duty or morality. At the same time, the sovereign, however exalted in rank, armed with power, and encompassed with splendor, would meet with various perplexities and embarrassments, which would render his situation much less happy and agreeable than it might outwardly seem. In raising that money which was necessary for the public service, he would find such difficulty, that it would appear like extortion on his part, rather than have the air of a contribution from the people. Another difficulty would arise from judicial proceedings, in which the prince



could not give that general satisfaction which would attend the decisions of judges popularly chosen. A consideration of the proper mode of conduct, also, toward persons distinguished by high birth or by opulence, or eminent in any other way, who might be hostile to the government of a single person, would involve the ruling individual in doubt and perplexity. If he should suffer these men to prosecute the career of popularity, his power would become insecure ; if he should treat them with arbitrary violence, he would excite discontent and odium. In the selection of officers both civil and military, the prince would likewise be considerably embarrassed. By appointing men of talent and spirit, he might eventually weaken his own power : by making choice of persons of an ordinary stamp and of low minds, he would expose his government, both at home and abroad, to obloquy and contempt.

For these and other reasons, Agrippa advised his imperial friend to resign to the senate and people that exorbitant power which he had acquired ; an act of magnanimity which would secure to him the highest respect and gratitude from an admiring nation, and enable him to pass the rest of his life in dignified repose and unmolested tranquillity. He did not, however, recommend an immediate dereliction of his authority, as such a step would be inexpedient and even hazardous in the unsettled state of affairs : but he proposed a previous enactment of salutary laws and seasonable regulations, that a good foundation for a popular superstructure might offer itself to the incipient labors of the new directors of the state.

Mæcenæ entertained and supported sentiments, widely differing from those of his political associate. He admitted that public liberty was just and desirable, as men were not born to be enslaved : but there was always a risque, he said, of it's being so abused, as to degenerate into licentiousness and faction. At the present time, that danger

was alarmingly increased by the relaxed morals and dissolute manners of the nation. The ancient Roman character was either extinct, or existed only in few instances. Probity, justice, self-denial, decency of demeanor, and correctness of conduct, had in a great measure given way to a latitude and laxity of principle, a spirit of selfishness and rapacity, a restless appetite for pleasure, and a want of virtue either public or private. Under such circumstances, a republican government would be so far from producing order and security, that it would be attended with commotions bordering upon anarchy. A state composed of a varied multiplicity of citizens and provincials, could not easily or quietly be governed in such a mode. It would be exposed to violent storms of discord and faction, like a ship without a captain or pilot: its course would be vacillating and unsteady; and there would be little chance of its arrival in a secure port. It was therefore necessary, in his opinion, that an able and prudent governor should be provided for such a state; one who had a complete knowledge of its wants and interests; who had a sense of honor and of duty; who could unite spirit with moderation, and combine vigor with humanity. Such an administrator might be found in the person whom he had the honor of addressing; and he hoped that no fear of censure, or apprehension of difficulty, would prompt his patron to shrink from that glorious task for which he was so eminently qualified. The alleged objections to monarchy were not, he said, so strong as to produce in his mind a conviction of the superior advantages of a republic. The affairs of finance and of judicature, and the distribution of offices, might be superintended by a prince with as much propriety and as little odium as by a senate or a popular assembly, and with a more uniform attention to the public good; and, with regard to his treatment of such citizens as might rise above the vulgar level, and put themselves too forward on the political scene, no real

danger would attend rigorous proceedings against them, in case of detected machinations or of actual sedition, if it should appear that nothing but a regard for general tranquillity induced him to punish or restrain them.

After expatiating on the preferable nature of monarchy, he offered such advice as tended to give security to that species of polity, and to produce general acquiescence, if not the fullness of approbation. His speech was applauded by Octavius, because it suited the ideas and inclinations of that politic citizen, who, at the same time, complimented the candor and sincerity of Agrippa.

Even if the acknowledged prince had not been otherwise disposed to retain the supremacy, one argument adduced by Mæcenas would have had particular weight with him; namely, that which was drawn from the danger of resigning the power that protected him. By his conduct during the civil war, he must have provoked the animosity and resentment of many, some of whom might be glad to wreak their vengeance upon him, as soon as they should find him defenceless. He now assumed the title of emperor, and commenced a course of enactments and regulations; of which, though they were brought forward at different times, it will be proper to give a connected account.

His conduct, with regard to the senate, calls for primary notice, because that assembly, in name, if not in substance, still sustained the supreme dignity. He *purified* that body, as he alleged, by the exclusion of unworthy members, and by an arbitrary supply of vacancies. The mode of ballot was first tried, in fixing upon the future members: but, this method being found inconvenient, he named those citizens whom he approved. He then prescribed new forms and rules for the management of public business, and regulated the meetings with minute precision. Antony had elevated the number of members to 1000; but Octavius fixed the amount at 600. He



pretended to leave to the majority a plenitude of power, and to content himself with the privileges of a simple senator, while he attended the assembly; but the effect of his purification remained, and his influence swayed the deliberations. In assuming the appellation of prince of the senate, which had been successively given under the republican government to distinguished members, as a mark of honor, not as a title of power, he disclaimed all intentions of acting as president, or of encroaching authoritatively on the freedom of debate. Remembering the disgust which Julius had excited by his arrogant treatment of the conscript fathers, he behaved to them with marked courtesy; occasionally mentioned in high terms their aggregate importance and dignity, and called for the reverence of the people to such an assembly. He left to that venerable body the decision of civil suits, in cases of appeal from inferior courts of judicature; and also the trial of those citizens who were accused of any offence against the state, or who had acted criminally or illegally as magistrates, officers, or provincial governors: but, without seeming to interfere, he generally procured such determinations and sentences as were agreeable to his views and wishes.

He permitted the annual election of consuls, tribunes, and other magistrates, according to the republican practice; but he virtually exercised the powers of all. When he had been chosen consul for many successive years, he obtained a permanent grant of all the powers belonging to that office. He also received, from a compliant senate, the perpetual prerogatives of a tribune of the people, and was thus invested with sacred inviolability. The citizens who were elected in the *comitia* to those functions, enjoyed exterior honors, but retained a very small share of authority. The *veto* of a tribune ceased to be efficacious or forcible; and that portion of the community which this magistrate represented, lost the privilege of an efficient concurrence in legislation, and in judgements respecting

public delinquency. The nominal censors had little influence, while the emperor, who was named perpetual censor, regulated the national finances, super-intended the morals, and exercised a commanding control over persons of every class. Under this character he appointed a triumvirate to take an occasional review of the senate, and nominated three other commissioners to inquire into the demeanor and conduct of the equestrian order<sup>6</sup>.

With the probable view of preventing the evasion of justice by the annual magistrates, he ordained, that no one should enter upon the administration of a province, or dependency of Rome, immediately after the expiration of his office. Of these external governments, he made a new division. He was empowered to retain all the territories of the empire under his jurisdiction, both in civil and military affairs: but he resigned to the senate the tranquil provinces, while those which were less settled were subjected to proprætors nominated by himself. His friends represented this concession as an act of high favor; but his retention of the military power, even in the former governments, obviously detracted from the efficiency of the grant, which he also weakened by an occasional interference in other respects.

Being considered as supreme commander of the whole army, and as the legitimate possessor of all the privileges which the consuls had enjoyed, he was so unwilling to surrender an atom of that formidable power which attended the command of the sword, that he even increased it, by maintaining an established guard within the walls of Rome<sup>7</sup>. Yet he affected to rule by complacency, rather than by terror, and to trust to the equity of his sway for

<sup>6</sup> Sueton. Vit. Augusti, cap. 27, 37.—Di, Cass.

<sup>7</sup> According to Suetonius, he testified his moderation, in this respect, by never suffering above three cohorts to remain in the city: but it must be added, that he kept a strong guard in the neighbouring towns, ready to obey his call whenever his authority seemed to be endangered.

popular support and general obedience, not to legionary intimidation. He settled the pay of the army upon a more regular basis, and in a more equitable proportion, than had before prevailed ; making a proper allowance for superiority of rank and length of service, and granting, to dismissed soldiers, a sufficient recompence to prevent them from being impelled by poverty into sedition. He established a separate treasury for these purposes, and appropriated new funds to the permanent demand. The army maintained by this prince amounted to twenty-five legions, exclusive of auxiliaries<sup>8</sup>. He had also a more considerable navy than the republican rulers had been accustomed to keep up ; but it bore a very small proportion to the army. The vessels were not only employed in the defence of the coasts and the protection of commerce, but were also used for the conveyance of provincial tributes, and of corn and other supplies, to the imperial metropolis.

In the affairs of finance, new regulations were either deemed necessary, or found to be expedient. When the republic had acquired many provinces by the valor of the people, the Roman citizens were favored with an exemption from imposts: but Octavius, finding the provincial tributes inadequate to the demands of his extended establishment, exacted duties for all sorts of merchandise, received at Rome from any part of the empire ; taxed even articles of ordinary consumption, when publicly sold ; and required, with some exceptions, a twentieth part of property, inherited or bequeathed. These requisitions excited murmurs ; which, however, were soon lost in the popularity of a prince whose attention to the interest of the state was generally acknowledged.

He also regulated the judicial system, and provided for

<sup>8</sup> If we allow 6000 men to each legion, and add an equal number of auxiliaries, the military force consisted of 300,000 men ; but this point is rendered uncertain by the varying amount of the legion.



the more effectual punishment of crimes : yet, when he personally filled the chair of judgement, he was sometimes too lenient even to persons who were guilty of great offences ; and, when the senate had condemned delinquents, he frequently exercised the prerogative of mercy. He observed, with a vigilant eye, the conduct of the judges, and repressed their corruption and mal-practices. That the attention of the existing courts might not be diverted from important adjudications, he instituted a fourth *decuria*, or company of ten judges, for the decision of minor causes ; and provincial appeals were assigned to the cognisance of those respectable citizens who had passed through the consular office. In fixing the commencement of the judicial age, he was of opinion that thirty years would give sufficient prudence and steadiness even for the most weighty decisions<sup>9</sup>.

Such, among other ordinances, were the regulations of this politic prince, who, while he enjoyed, by the lavish grants of the senate and by the power of his legions, the unquestioned supremacy of the Roman world, endeavoured to disguise from the people that slavery which was their fate, and to which the generality submitted, not merely without repining, but with cheerfulness and pleasure.

When Agrippa was consul with the emperor, Ante Chr. 28. an equality of honor was allowed to him : and, as he was known to be the chief friend of his sovereign, whose niece was given to him in marriage, he was almost equally respected by the nation. At the time of their conjunct administration, the people were gratified with an edict for the abolition of the acts of the triumvirate, if they were such as could be annulled ; for the most odious acts of that arbitrary association, being a series of murders, could not be revoked. If some regard to justice was shown in this respect, liberality was evinced on another

<sup>9</sup> Sueton. cap. 32, 33.†

occasion. Sums of money were given to senators who were destitute of the means of honorable support: corn was copiously distributed among the poor, and great arrears due to the treasury were remitted. The citizens, in the same year, were indulged with a variety of sports and entertainments, particularly those which were instituted in commemoration of the battle of Actium. They were also pleased at the completion and dedication of a temple to Apollo upon the Palatine mount, and at the erection of a public library within it's precincts<sup>10</sup>.

By these and other acts, Octavius acquired such popularity, that he thought he might safely propose a dereliction of his power, without the risque of an acceptance of his offer. Having assembled the conscript fathers, he ad-

Ante Chr.

27.

dressed them in an artful harangue, beginning with a statement of his great power and influence (founded upon the ruin or depression of his enemies); proceeding to a vindication of his motives for the acquisition of that power; asserting his earnest wish to enjoy the tranquillity of private life; announcing a resignation of his authority over the city, the provinces, the army, and the whole nation; and concluding with the offer of salutary advice for the government of the state. His speech was frequently interrupted by acclamations, while every auditor doubted his sincerity. The friends of republican polity were restrained by fear from a delivery of their real sentiments: and the majority of the members, dreading a return of intestine convulsions, and trusting to the future moderation of a conqueror who had satiated every wish, and whose prudent and judicious character was generally acknowledged, were inclined to deprecate a renunciation which seemed to be unseasonable and hazardous. Both parties concurred in requesting that he would not so far desert the public interest, as to relinquish that

power to which the favor of the Gods had raised him, and which he was so well qualified to exercise with honor to himself and advantage to the state. He repeated his wish for retirement; but at length consented to retain his authority for ten years, under the modest title of the tribunitian power.

Among the exterior honors decreed to him by the senate, one was particularly calculated to please a conqueror and a patriot. Laurels, surmounted by oaken wreaths, were planted in the front of his palace, intimating both his military success and his zeal for the security of the citizens and the preservation of the state. A new appellation was assigned to him, expressive of the greatest respect: he was styled *Augustus*<sup>11</sup>, by the transfer of a religious term, which was used for objects so sacred as to be deemed worthy of profound reverence.

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## LETTER II.

*Continuation of the History of AUGUSTUS, to the Death of Agrippa.*

THE fortunate emperor, being now invested with all the power which the senate and the people had formerly enjoyed, attended with invigorated zeal to political concerns, and studiously provided for a continuance of that peace and order which he had already restored. He gave vigor to the laws, encouragement to the arts, security to commerce; and, while he withheld popular liberty, he did not haughtily domineer or cruelly tyrannise, moderation being the general feature of his government.

<sup>11</sup> The senator who proposed this dignified name was Munatius Plancus. The emperor would have preferred the name of the first king of Rome, if he had not apprehended that it would give disgust, as implying a wish for royalty.



After a course of regulation in Italy, the emperor visited Gaul, as the affairs of that province had not been settled in the regular form which his judgement was disposed to adopt. At Narbonne, he held a great council, in which he fixed the assessments of the province on a moderate scale. Upon the affairs of Spain he bestowed equal attention; but he found less facility in the adjustment.

Ante Chr. Some of the states of that country had not been  
<sup>26.</sup> fully subdued by preceding commanders; particularly, the Asturians and Cantabrians.

While he was employed in the peninsula, he received unpleasing intelligence from Egypt. Cornelius Gallus had given great disgust to the people by his pride, tyranny, and rapacity; and he had thrown out illiberal reflexions upon his imperial patron, who, on the adduction of a charge against the governor by his associate Valerius Largus, ordered him to confine himself to certain parts of the empire. The senate, not deeming this restriction a sufficient punishment, proceeded to the investigation of specific articles of impeachment, and, having condemned Gallus to exile, adjudged his property to the emperor. Shocked at his disgrace, the governor committed suicide, to the great regret of Augustus, who, while he commended the zeal of the senators for his service, complained, with tears, of their not allowing him to treat his friends as he thought proper, or to moderate his anger in considering of their delinquency<sup>1</sup>. The offender was a man of some military eminence, and had also acquired reputation as a poet.

The Spanish war presented greater difficulties and delays than the emperor expected to find. The Cantabrians, indeed, did not venture to oppose him in a  
Ante Chr.  
<sup>25.</sup> regular or general engagement; but they harassed him by ambuscades, and by occasional sallies from

<sup>1</sup> Sueton. cap. 66.

their mountainous retreats. His consequent anxiety and fatigue so impaired his health, that he retired to Tarraco for the enjoyment of repose; leaving the conduct of the war to Antistius. The lieutenant was more successful than his master; for the Cantabrians, not being afraid to encounter him, were hurried to a defeat by their presumption. He captured some of their principal towns; and, at an elevated post, to which he confined a considerable part of their force by a circumvallation of fifteen miles in extent, he reduced the barbarians to such extremity, that a great part of the garrison rushed into suicide to avoid captivity. In the same campaign, the Asturians, descending from their mountains to attack Carisius in his camp, found him so well prepared to receive them, that they were repelled after a brisk conflict, and pursued to Lancia, the largest and strongest of their towns, which, with other fortified places, fell into the hands of the Romans<sup>2</sup>.

During this war, Varro distinguished himself by the subjugation of the Salassi, whose Alpine abodes were not inaccessible to the legionaries. Being attacked by various detachments, and prevented from uniting their force, they sued for peace. The general ordered them to pay a certain sum for that indulgence; and, thinking that no other punishment would be inflicted upon them for their having intercepted a pecuniary convoy belonging to the emperor, they gladly promised to comply with the demand. He immediately sent troops on pretence of collecting the money; and 36,000 persons, of both sexes and all ages, were seized and sold as slaves, beside 8000 men who were fit for military service; with a proviso that they should reside in a distant country, and should not be restored to liberty before the expiration of twenty years<sup>3</sup>.

To various parts of Asia and Africa, Augustus, at the same time, directed his attention. The death of Amyn-

<sup>2</sup> Flor. lib. iv. cap. 12.—Di. Cass. lib. liji.

<sup>3</sup> Strab. lib. iv.—Di. Cass. lib. liii. cap. 14.

tas, to whom Antony had granted the kingdom of Galatia and some portions of Lycaonia and Pamphylia, furnished the emperor with an opportunity of augmenting the provincial dependencies of Rome. He restored freedom to the Pamphylian towns, while he subjected to his own government the other territories of the deceased prince. Having a friendly regard for Juba the Numidian (son of the prince who lost his life in the cause of Pompey), he put him in possession of a part of Getulia, and of the dominions of the two Mauritanian kings, Bocchus and Bogud; the former of whom, while he supported Octavius against Antony, had taken advantage of a sudden and imprudent expedition of Bogud into Spain, and had deprived him of his division of Mauritania, which the conqueror retained with his own kingdom until his death. The Jewish king Herod also received marks of imperial favor, being gratified with the addition of Trachonitis and other territories to those dominions

Ante Chr. 24. which he had been allowed to retain after the battle of Actium, upon his presentation of a large sum of money to the victor.

The absence of Augustus from Italy was so far from impairing or weakening his power, that the senate took an oath for the confirmation of his acts and ordinances, and released him from all obligation of observing the laws of the state. His return to Rome diffused general joy, which was evinced by votes of honor and effusions of praise. His nephew Marcellus was also favored with public applause, and allowed to offer himself a candidate for the consular dignity, ten years before the legal age. This youth was the son of Octavia by Caius Marcellus, and had been recently married to his cousin Julia. Being considered as the heir of the empire, he was obnoxious to the jealousy of Livia, who hated him as the rival of her son Drusus or of Tiberius; but he was the favorite of his uncle and of the people.



Encouraged by the departure of Augustus from Spain, the Cantabrians and Asturians endeavoured to shake off the Roman yoke: but the legionaries checked their efforts, ravaged their country, burned some of their towns, and reduced their tribes to full submission<sup>4</sup>. Colonies were now planted in various districts; the Roman arts were thenceforward more prevalent in the peninsula: industry was exerted with effect; tranquillity and order were established.

In Arabia, the Roman arms were less successful. Ælius Gallus, embarking on the Red Sea with 10,000 men, proceeded to Leucocome, but did not reach that port before he had lost many of his vessels among the rocks and shelves. Disease diminished his force after his landing, and kept him long in a state of inactivity. When he put himself in motion, he displayed the Roman energy in repeated victories, and in the reduction of several towns of Arabia Felix: but the heat, the insalubrious air, want of good water and of general accommodation, again produced disorders among his troops; and he was obliged to retreat into Arabia Petræa, whence he crossed the gulph into Egypt, after the loss of the greater part of his army<sup>5</sup>.

This remote enterprise excited little interest. An object of more immediate concern was the dangerous state of the emperor's health. Apprehending that his life might soon be closed by the progress of an hepatic complaint, he summoned the magistrates and principal senators and knights to his palace, and put into the hands of the consul Piso a written account of the military force and revenues, and of the state of affairs in other respects<sup>6</sup>. Of a future sovereign he made no mention: but some were induced to believe, from his delivery

<sup>4</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liii. cap. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Strab. lib. xvi.—Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. vi. cap. 28.—Di. Cass.

<sup>6</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liii. cap. 19.

of a signet-ring to Agrippa, that he intended to point out that minister as an able and worthy successor. When the usual course had been tried in vain, Antonius Musa recommended cold bathing and cold draughts; and this change, it is said, restored health to his imperial patient<sup>7</sup>. In honor of the cure, a statue was erected to the physician near the sculptured representation of Æsculapius, that he might seem to be on a par with that deity: a liberal recompence was voted to him by the senate; and, in consideration of his merit or good fortune, the professors of medicine were indulged with an exemption from imposts. The same physician, when he applied his cold system to a disorder which had seised Marcellus, was not so fortunate as to cure him. It was indeed suspected, that Livia, by clandestine practices, accelerated the dissolution of this promising youth: but, as the intemperature of the air, both in that and the following year, occasioned a great number of deaths, it is not improbable that he was among the victims of the contagion.

A rivalry between Marcellus and Agrippa, being observed or suspected by Augustus, prompted him to send his minister into Syria<sup>8</sup>, that the rising jealousy might not break out into animosity. Sending a lieutenant into the Syrian province, Agrippa retired to the isle of Lesbos, where he remained in dignified seclusion. After the death of Marcellus, the emperor wished for his presence and advice; but he did not immediately return to Rome.

For many successive years, Augustus had exercised the consular office; but he now declined the honor, that it might be more accessible to others. This appearance of <sup>of</sup> moderation, and his generous treatment of some <sup>Ante Chr.</sup> of the friends of Brutus, so pleased the senate, that he was declared, by an unanimous vote, perpetual

<sup>7</sup> Sueton. cap. 81.—Di. Cass.

<sup>8</sup> Di Cass.—But Suetonius and Paterculus say, that Agrippa spontaneously left Rome.

tribune of the people, permitted to enjoy a permanent proconsular authority, and invested in the provinces with a power superior to that of the regular governors. To an emperor who had been expressly elevated above all law, and released from all obligations which affected the rest of the community, these votes did not give any additional power: but they were marks of high respect, and served to evince the attachment or the subserviency of the senate and the people.

As famine and an epidemic disorder made great havock soon after he had ceased to be consul, these calamities were imputed by many of the citizens to his secession from that magistracy; and he was earnestly desired to resume it, or accept the dictatorial dignity. He seemed displeased at their importunate solicitations, and declared his resolution of rejecting the offered honors: but he promised to attend to the procurement of constant supplies of the necessaries of life, appointing two citizens, who had been prætors five years before, to act as his deputies in that important concern. Being also requested to assume the censorship in perpetuity, he immediately named others for that office, not without giving judicious directions for their conduct. Notwithstanding his various avocations, he sometimes condescended to plead in the *forum* for his accused friends; and, on those occasions, he patiently endured the animadversions and obloquy of the opposite advocates<sup>9</sup>.

His general popularity did not entirely prevent the machinations of discontented individuals. Fannius Cæpio, a profligate senator, conspired against his life with Murena and other citizens; but their schemes were baffled by early detection. Mæcenas, by mentioning the discovery to his wife, who was the sister of Murena, gave that conspirator an opportunity of absconding, and was repri-



manded by the emperor for his imprudence, in disclosing a secret to a female. This delinquent, however, did not ultimately escape pursuit; nor did Cæpio long elude the vigilance of search. One of his slaves could not be induced, by any persuasions or menaces, to betray him: but another pointed out the place of his concealment. The father of Cæpio rewarded with freedom the fidelity of the former, and punished the latter with crucifixion, without offending Augustus by the boldness of his conduct. The two chief conspirators, being condemned on the accusation of Tiberius, suffered death. Murena, before he engaged in the plot, sustained a fair character: but neither this consideration, nor the emperor's high regard for Proculus, the brother of the daring mal-content, saved him from the impartiality of justice<sup>10</sup>.

The refusal of the consulate by Augustus gave occasion to a warm and tumultuous contest. It might have been prevented by his personal authority; but he was then in Sicily. He ordered the candidates to appear before him,

Ante Chr. and sharply reprov'd them; and, after a renewal

<sup>21.</sup> of tumult, the election was decided. Agrippa, being appointed to the government of Rome, restored tranquillity by his prudence and spirit. This minister was already the husband of the emperor's niece Marcella; but he was now ordered to repudiate this lady, and espouse the widowed Julia, that he might derive additional weight and importance from so near an affinity with his sovereign. "You have rendered Agrippa (said Mæcenas to "his patron) so powerful, that you cannot secure your-  
"self, unless you either make him your son-in-law, or  
"put him to death." But, even without this new connexion, Agrippa was not the man who would have betrayed or injured his sovereign and benefactor.

When Augustus had exercised his political wisdom in Sicily, he visited the Grecian dependencies of the empire.

To the Lacedæmonians he showed marks of favor, because they had afforded an asylum to Livia, when a fugitive; and, on the other hand, he deprived the Athenians of their authority over Ægina and Eretria, because they had favored Antony. After passing the winter at Samos, he personally adjusted the affairs of the Asiatic provinces. While he was employed in regulating the go-<sup>Ante Chr. 20.</sup>vernment of Syria, his proximity to the Parthian confines alarmed Phraates. This prince had formerly delivered up one of his sons as an hostage to the Romans, in consideration of their not assisting his rival Tiridates; but the son had lately been sent back by Augustus, who expected, in return for this condescension, a surrender of the prisoners and standards taken from the armies of Crassus and of Antony. With this restitution the emperor was now gratified; and he considered it as equivalent to a victory<sup>11</sup>.

The disordered state of Armenia, at the same time, seemed to require the attention of the Roman sovereign. In preference to Artaxias, the people called for his brother Tigranes, who then resided at Rome; and Tiberius was therefore ordered to undertake an expedition for the dethronement of the obnoxious prince. The assassination of the king by some of his relatives having preceded the arrival of the Roman army, Tiberius found no difficulty in elevating Tigranes to the throne<sup>12</sup>.

The great extent of the empire, and the admirable policy with which it was governed, attracted the respect and regard of remote nations. Not only the Asiatic Sarmatians, and the most distant of the Scythian communities, but even the potent sovereign of India, sent ambassadors to Augustus with compliments and presents<sup>13</sup>.

11 Sueton. cap. 21.—Di. Cass. lib. liv. cap. 4.—Just. lib. xlii.

12 Taciti Annal. lib. ii.—Di. Cass.

13 Sueton. cap. 21.—Di. Cass.—Flor.—The Seres are also mentioned among the nations that courted the favor of Augustus. Some have mistaken these for

Such unexpected marks of attention were highly pleasing to the prince whose fame and consequence were thus acknowledged.

From Ethiopia he also received an embassy. The active ambition of Candace, queen of Meroë (in the northern division of that country), had hurried her into a war with the Romans, after their force in Egypt had been weakened by the unfortunate expedition to Arabia. Her army invaded the Thebais, took Syene and other towns, and captured three cohorts: but the mere intelligence of the governor's approach over-awed the invaders into a retreat. They were pursued into their own country, attacked by a force which scarcely exceeded a third part of their number, and routed with great facility. The victors, after having destroyed Candace's capital, returned into Egypt, leaving a garrison in one of her towns, which she in vain endeavoured to reduce. Being now desirous of peace, the queen sent deputies to Samos, and concluded a treaty with Augustus, who remitted the tribute which the governor of Egypt had imposed<sup>14</sup>.

Another African nation, about the same time, felt the superiority of the Roman arms. The Garamantes, who occupied the country to the southward of the Carthaginian territories, were attacked by the proconsul Balbus, and were so far conquered, that he was thought worthy of a triumph.

Ante Chr. The emperor's return to Europe was accelerated by the intelligence which he received of new commotions at Rome, which the severity of Saturninus, who was then sole consul, could not entirely quell. Two deputies were sent to request his speedy presence. One of them (Lucretius Vespillo) had been formerly pro-

the inhabitants of the northern parts of China. They occupied, as we may rather conclude, the country now called Thibet.

<sup>14</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liv. cap. 2.—Strab. lib. xvii.



scribed: but he was now promoted to the consulate by Augustus, whose re-appearance at Rome restored tranquillity. The anniversary of his return was ordered to be kept as a festival. He was declared censor for five years, and consul for life; and the senate desired him to enact whatever laws he might think proper, promising to take an oath for the strict observance of all his edicts.

His faithful minister, Agrippa, was usefully employed in Gaul and Spain. He suppressed some disturbances in the former country, and checked the encroachments of the German tribes upon the lands of their western neighbours. In the peninsula, he was harassed by a revolt. Many of the Cantabrians had deserted (and some had even assassinated) the masters to whom they had been sold as slaves, and, returning to their native mountains, had drawn their countrymen into an insurrection. Agrippa found great difficulty in prevailing upon his troops to encounter the fierce revolvers; but he did not inhumanly decimate (as some generals would have treated) the refractory battalions: he merely inflicted that disgrace which tended to reclaim them. The insurrection being at length quelled by the destruction of a multitude of the enemy, the survivors were disarmed, and compelled to inhabit less elevated districts. For these and other services, the emperor rewarded his son-in-law with a grant of the tribunitian power for five years.

It was about this time, that Augustus and his friend reformed the senate. Of the multitude of members Ante Chr. 18. excluded by his mandates, some were not offended at the stigma; while others could not refrain from expressions of discontent. These regulations were followed by a conspiracy, if they did not contribute to it's production. Egnatius Rufus, disappointed in his hope of the consulate, and finding that the popular favor did not sufficiently recommend him to Augustus, is said to have en-

tered into seditious combinations, affecting even the life of his sovereign<sup>15</sup>. That senator and some of his supposed accomplices were put to death ; but the emperor did not venture to punish the high-priest Lepidus, whom he suspected of being privy to the treasonable machinations. When Labeo (who acted as censor) forbore, in his review or survey of the senate, to erase from the register the name of the reputed delinquent, he was threatened with the vengeance of Augustus for not doing his duty : but he excused himself by saying, “ If you still suffer him to enjoy the pontifical dignity, you cannot reasonably blame me for permitting his continuance among the senators.”

A moral reform, connected with the sexual intercourse, was the next object of imperial attention. He wished to promote population, in concert with chastity and correctness of manners. He therefore enacted a law for the severe punishment of adultery, allowing the injured person even to take away the lives of the offenders ; and, while he imposed a heavy fine upon unmarried adults, he promised rewards for the legitimate increase of the community. The censor Metellus had formerly proposed a law<sup>16</sup>, by which all citizens should be compelled to enter into the matrimonial state ; and his speech on the subject was so highly approved by Augustus, that he repeated it to the senators, and incorporated it in an edict which he now promulgated<sup>17</sup>. Some of the senators represented the immodesty and licentiousness of the women as a great discouragement to marriage, and desired him to exert his influence and authority, in the first instance, for the reformation of female morals. He was not pleased at this

<sup>15</sup> Paterc. lib. ii. cap. 91.—Sueton. cap. 19.—Dio speaks doubtfully of this conspiracy, alleging that he could not ascertain whether the imputations of guilt were true or false.

<sup>16</sup> In the 130th year before the Christian æra.

<sup>17</sup> Liv. Epit. lib. lix.—Sueton. cap. 69.

suggestion, as it seemed obliquely to satirise his amorous and adulterous propensities : but he replied, that this ought to be the general care of the men, who ought to give good advice to the objects of their love, and such exhortations as might tend to convert them into modest and sedate wives. The new law not being honored with strict observance, he made a subsequent attempt <sup>18</sup>, with the same view, and with better (but far from complete) effect <sup>19</sup>.

After some other internal regulations, the emperor gratified the people with the solemnisation of the secular games. The last time of their celebration had preceded this renewal beyond the stated term of a century <sup>20</sup>. They were now solemnised with extraordinary magnificence, and with imposing effect ; for, in the direction and preparation of games and exhibitions, Augustus had great taste and judgement. While the festival continued, he affected to show his regard for morality by prohibiting all young persons of both sexes from attending any of the nocturnal performances, unless they were accompanied by some relative of mature age and steady habits<sup>21</sup>.

Games which were intended to commemorate the foundation of Rome, were properly followed by the dedication of a temple (recently erected) to Romulus. After presiding on this occasion, the emperor left Rome to the government of Statilius Taurus, a prudent and able statesman, and repaired with Tiberius to the vicinity of the Rhine. The Sicambri and other German nations had ventured to cross that boundary, and had harassed different parts of Gaul with ravages and depredations. A body of cavalry, being sent against them by Lollius, could not

<sup>18</sup> In the ninth year of the established æra.

<sup>19</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liv. cap. 9 ; lvi. 1, et seq.

<sup>20</sup> Being 131 years before the year 17.

<sup>21</sup> Sueton. cap. 31, 43.



withstand their attacks, but fled to the head-quarters of that general; whose infantry, after a short conflict, they also routed. Augustus marched against them to revenge this disgrace, and to enforce their submission. They retreated as he advanced, and pacified him by giving hostages for their future forbearance <sup>22</sup>.

Some hostile movements disturbed the tranquillity of other parts of the empire. The Vennonetes and their Alpine neighbours, by encroaching upon the provincial territories, exposed themselves to the vengeance of Silius; whose success over these enemies, being enhanced by his exploits against the barbarians of Noricum and Pannonia, procured for him the honor of a triumph. The same testimony of respect was decreed to Asinius Gallus for a victory over the Sarmatians <sup>23</sup>.

The rapacity and tyranny of Licinius, formerly a Gallic Ante Chr. prisoner and slave, excited such odium among his <sup>15.</sup> countrymen, whom he had been commissioned to govern, that an insurrection seemed to be on the point of breaking out. So loud and general were the complaints against him, that Augustus menaced him with exemplary punishment; which, it is said, he escaped by presenting his treasures to the emperor, as the produce of that zeal for the public service, which, by impoverishing the provincials, had circumscribed their means of revolt <sup>24</sup>. The lenity shown to this flagitious peculator reflects great discredit on his patron.

Augustus had made few additions to the Roman territories: it was rather his wish to retain in peace those provinces which already belonged to the empire, than to seek occasions of conquest. But, as the Rhætians were turbulent and hostile, he resolved to chastise them for their incursions into the provincial territories, and bring them completely under his yoke. With that view, he sent out

<sup>22</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liv. cap. 12.—Paterc. lib. ii.

<sup>23</sup> Fast. Consul.

<sup>24</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liv. cap. 12.

Drusus, the younger of Livia's sons, who encountered the marauders near the spot where now stands the city of Trent, and routed them with little difficulty. They were not, however, disposed to submit to the victor, or to desist from their depredations and hostilities. Tiberius was therefore commissioned to act against them and their Vindelician neighbours and associates; and he conducted the war with great spirit and success<sup>25</sup>. From the loss of ancient memorials, the particular incidents of this war are at present unknown. We merely find, that the two brothers, and the officers whom they detached into various districts, reduced many towns and fortresses, defeated the enemy in several conflicts, and enforced an entire submission. The young men of both nations were removed and dispersed by the policy of the emperor, who hoped thus to preclude a revolt; and, with a view of strengthening the subjection of the remaining inhabitants, the colonies of Drusomagus and Augusta were established among them<sup>26</sup>.

While peace was thus restored between the Danube and the Alps, hostilities arose near the shores of the Euxine. The sovereignty of the Bosphoric kingdom was claimed by an adventurer named Scribonius, who not only boasted of his descent from the great Mithridates, but affirmed that Augustus had sent him to provide for the security of the realm. Asander, shocked and terrified at the audacity of the claimant, hastened his death by abstinence from food; and his daughter was constrained to give her hand to Scribonius; whose usurpation was no sooner known to Agrippa, than he desired Polemon, the vassal king of Pontus, to dethrone the pretender. The indignant people anticipated that object by the assassination of Scribonius; but they refused to submit to the Pontic king, whom they opposed as an ambitious invader. He was victorious in

25 Di. Cass. lib. liv.—Liv. Epit. lib. cxxxvi.—Paterc. lib. ii. cap. 95.

26 Freinsh. Supplem. in Livii lib. cxxxvi.

the field ; yet he could not subdue the nation. Agrippa <sup>Ante Chr.</sup> led an army to the coast, and was preparing to  
 14. embark for the Bosporus, when the rumor of his approach intimidated the people into submission. They accepted Polemon as their king, on his marriage with the widowed princess. A thanksgiving was ordered at Rome for this success ; and a triumph was decreed to Agrippa ; but his modesty declined the honor <sup>27</sup>.

During a short interval of peace, the emperor enacted va-  
 Ante Chr. rious regulations. He settled the term of military  
 13. service, and fixed the rewards which were to accompany dismissal <sup>28</sup>. The veterans frequently called for agrarian distributions ; but the difficulty of providing a sufficient portion of land, without giving great disgust to the present possessors, induced him to grant, in lieu of it, a certain sum of money. He then turned his thoughts to the supply of numeral deficiency in the senate. The honor of a seat had been declined by many, because it was a degraded and subservient assembly ; and that magnitude of property which it's members were required to possess, as a qualification for the dignity, operated to the exclusion of others. Augustus ordained, that all sons and grandsons of senators, if they had the requisite income, and had not completed their thirty-fifth year, and were not maimed or deformed, should take their seats among the conscript fathers. Inferior concerns did not escape his attention, or elude his vigilance. He augmented his exterior dignity, at this time, by the acquisition of the pontificate, of which he had not dared to deprive Lepidus, from an apprehension of exciting public odium. For the decease of the high-priest he had patiently waited : he had no pretence for putting to death his associate in triumviral iniquity ; and, if he had banished him, the people would still have

<sup>27</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liv.

<sup>28</sup> The prætorian cohorts, or imperial guards, were to serve twelve years, and other troops sixteen.



regarded him as the lawful pontiff; for they considered that character as indelible.

The repugnance of the Pannonians to the Roman yoke required a renewal of warlike preparations. Agrippa was ordered to act against the insurgents; and the powers granted to him on that occasion were greater than any other commander enjoyed out of Italy. He hastened to attack them in the winter; but no conflict ensued; for the Pannonians, over-awed by the number of the Roman army and the fame of the general, implored pardon, and promised obedience. Soon after his return from this expedition, he died in Campania, greatly lamented both by the prince and the people.

Ante Chr.  
12.

Agrippa was not distinguished by high birth; but his merit would have dignified the most obscure station. Without his able and zealous support, Augustus, perhaps, would not have obtained the sovereignty of the Roman dominions. The mind of Agrippa was comprehensive; he had a sound judgement; and his talents, both for war and politics, were on numerous occasions displayed to advantage. His qualifications and success, and the favor which he enjoyed at court, did not excite the envy of the patricians, because his moderation was exemplary and his patriotism undoubted. In his private character, he was frank, upright, liberal, and friendly; and, in an age of degeneracy and vice, his general conduct bore the stamp of virtue.

## LETTER III.

*Sequel of the Reign of Augustus.*

Ante Chr. THE death of Agrippa threw into the hands of  
 12. Tiberius a greater degree of power than he  
 deserved to enjoy. Nature had undoubtedly endowed  
 him with discernment and penetration; but pride and  
 selfishness perverted his understanding. He dissembled  
 his ill qualities, however, that he might not give such  
 disgust to the emperor, as to obstruct his own advancement.  
 Augustus would not have so highly favored him, if Caius  
 and Lucius, the sons of Agrippa, had not been too young  
 to assist in the administration.

As the Pannonians, released from the dread of Agrippa,  
 were inclined to revoke their late submissions, Tiberius  
 was sent to complete their subjugation. In this campaign,  
 the Scordisci were highly useful to him, being better  
 acquainted than the Romans with the *manœuvres* and dis-  
 cipline of the enemy. He ravaged the lands of the insur-  
 gents, routed them in several conflicts, disarmed many  
 of their tribes, and transplanted a multitude of their youth  
 into other countries. The honors of military parade, in-  
 stead of a regular triumph, were deemed, by the empe-  
 ror's jealousy, a sufficient recompence for this service.

An insurrection of the Sicambri recalled Drusus into  
 the field. Regardless of the safety of their countrymen  
 whom they had given as hostages, they took up arms with  
 an appearance of zeal, and were joined by some neigh-  
 bouring nations on both sides of the Rhine. Having  
 easily allayed the discontent which a late *census* had pro-  
 duced among the Gauls, who deemed such an enumera-

tion a badge of slavery, and the fore-runner of taxation and military conscription, Drusus proceeded toward the Rhine, and repelled those German warriors who attempted to cross the stream. He chastised the Usipetes and Sicambri, sailed in triumph down the Rhine to the German ocean, and exacted promises of submission from the Frisians, who even rescued him from danger when he was passing over a lake to the borders of the Chaucian territory. Avoiding a winter campaign, he then returned to Rome, where he was advanced to the prætorian dignity.

In the spring he renewed the war; and, after subduing the Usipetes, over-ran the territories of the Si- Ante Chr. cambri, at a time when resentment for a refusal 11.

of co-operation had impelled the majority of that nation into a war with the Catti. He also entered the confines of the Cherusci, and reached the Weser, which he would have passed, if, in addition to the dread of a scarcity of provisions and the approach of winter, a swarm of bees had not ominously appeared in his camp. In his return toward the Rhine, he involved himself in such difficulties of situation, that his army might have been ruined, if the Germans had not attacked him in a careless, disorderly manner. He bravely repelled their desultory assaults, and safely arrived in the provincial districts<sup>2</sup>.

About the same time, a war which had arisen in Thrace was brought to a close. Vologæses, a priest of the Bessian community, had taken arms against the son of Cotys, a prince who adhered to the Romans, and met with great success. Many of the Thracian tribes readily joined him; and fierce incursions were made into Macedon. To quell these commotions, Lucius Piso was detached from his Pamphylian government. He was unsuccessful in his first conflict; but, vigorously persisting in his attacks, and taking every opportunity of harassing the enemy, he sub-

<sup>2</sup> Di. Cass. lib. liv. cap. 23.—Flor. iv. 12.



dued the whole country in three campaigns <sup>3</sup>. For his exploits, of which, for want of records, the detail cannot be given, he was complimented with triumphal honors.

<sup>10.</sup> Ante Chr. The German war continued to call forth the exertions of the gallant Drusus. The Catti and other nations having joined the Sicambri, the war assumed a more serious aspect: but that commander acted with such vigor, as to reduce his adversaries to submission. His brother equally distinguished himself against the Dalmatians and Pannonians. The former complained of Roman exactions; but their revolt did not procure them the desired relief; for Tiberius compelled them to submit to that government which they had renounced. He then encountered the Pannonian revolvers, defeated them with great slaughter, and again brought them under the yoke. The Dacians, who had made some irruptions into the provincial territories, were also chastised, and obliged to re-pass the Danube with disgrace <sup>4</sup>.

<sup>9.</sup> Ante Chr. Drusus, while he enjoyed the consular dignity, undertook another expedition into Germany. He was repeatedly victorious over the armies that opposed him in his progress to the Elbe; but, in his return, his horse suddenly fell with him, and fractured one of his legs; and the accident, for want of chirurgical skill, proved fatal <sup>5</sup>.

Various accomplishments, and great merit, ennobled the character of Drusus. He had enlarged his under-

<sup>3</sup> Paterc. lib. ii. cap. 98.—Di. Cass. lib. liiv. cap. 26.—Liv. Epit. lib. cxxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> Fréinsb. Supplem. in Livii librum cxxxix.

<sup>5</sup> Liv. Epit. lib. cal.—Dio and Suetonius do not make the least mention of the accident, but merely say, that he died of some disorder. It was reported that he was poisoned by Augustus, because he so earnestly wished for the restoration of liberty to the Romans, that, in a letter to his brother, he declared himself ready to embrace the first opportunity of compelling the emperor to relinquish his power: but the sanguinary propensities of this prince were then dormant, and he had too great an affection for Livia, and too high a regard for her son, to perpetrate such an act as was imputed to him on this occasion.

standing by study, and expanded his mind by reflexion. Even the practice of war did not brutalise or harden his heart. His disposition was naturally mild; his manners were pleasing: he was kind, liberal, and generous. His soldiers regretted his loss, as that of a father or a friend. Augustus and Tiberius honored his memory by a public *elogium*: the epithet of Germanicus was assigned to him and his posterity: statues, a triumphed arch of marble, and other marks of general respect, were readily conceded to his fame.

The emperor, pretending to be weary of a long <sup>Ante Chr.</sup> exercise of power, offered to comply with the <sup>200 B.C.</sup> supposed wish of Drusus and other patriots, and declared that he resigned his authority <sup>6</sup>. But he knew that the senate would request him to resume it; and, while he affected to receive the grant with reluctance, he looked forward to the permanence of the acquisition. He performed, with renovated diligence, the task of government; and, not neglecting the pursuits of war, he commissioned Tiberius to extend the Roman sway by a new invasion of Germany.

Domitius had recently crossed the Elbe, and made some impression upon the tribes near that river; but Augustus protested against this remote warfare, and desired his officers to confine their operations to the left side of the Elbe. On the approach of Tiberius, many of the states solicited peace; which the emperor refused to grant, unless the Sicambri, whose zeal for war had particularly offended him, should join in the solicitation: and, even when they did, he gave such disgust by his contemptuous treatment of their application, that some of their deputies, dispersed in different towns, indignantly destroyed themselves. Peace not being concluded, Tiberius overrun the country between the Elbe and the Rhine, accom-

<sup>6</sup> Di. Cass. lib. iv. cap. 5.



panied by Caius, the eldest of Agrippa's sons. For the acts of this campaign, he did not deserve the honor of a triumph; with which, however, he was gratified by his step-father, who also again promoted him to the consulate.

With whatever regard Augustus might outwardly treat Tiberius (to whom, after the death of Agrippa, he had given Julia in marriage), he had no real affection for him, but was induced, by his love for the empress, to favor and promote her son. He was more attached to a distinguished citizen whom he at this time lost, and whose disinterested and zealous support he had long enjoyed. This friend was Mæcenas, whom, next to Agrippa, he esteemed and valued.

Mæcenas is more known to fame as a patron of literature, than as a statesman: but he had great merit in the latter capacity. His able and upright administration, in the absence of his patron from Rome, rendered him justly popular. When public business required his attention, he was alert, vigilant, and indefatigable: but, in the intervals of leisure, he declined into the softness of luxury and the languor of effeminacy<sup>7</sup>: yet this apparent weakness did not expose him to contempt; so respectable was his general character.

When Tiberius re-appeared in the field as an enemy of the Germans, he had no opportunity of signalling his military talents. After his return from an abortive campaign, Armenia was proposed to him as a scene of action; but he did not long remain in that province. To the surprise of all, he resolved to retire for some years from public life. When he requested the imperial permission for his retreat, he pretended that he was satiated with honors, and that his object was

Ante Chr.

6.

to seek a respite from the toils of war and politics: but he afterward alleged, as a reason for his depar-



ture from Rome, that he wished not to be suspected of obstructing the rise or checking the influence of Caius and his brother Lucius, who had a right to expect the highest favor at court. This affectation of delicacy was mere artifice. He thought so highly of his own abilities and importance, that the emperor and the people, he flattered himself, would find it necessary to recall him, for the honor and security of the state.

When he had retired to Rhodes, the adulterous profligacy of his wife exposed her to her father's resentment. Her familiarity with numerous lovers had long been known to the public: but Augustus was unwilling to give credit to the rumors of her guilt. When he had at length fully detected her licentiousness, he was so shocked and confounded, that he for some time avoided all society. He at first threatened her with death; but the feelings of a father revolted from such cruelty, and he merely banished her to a small island near the coast of Campania. A son of Mark Antony, who was one of her gallants, killed himself, when the offended emperor had marked him out for destruction. Several others, who were involved in the same criminality, were put to death, while some were punished with exile.

Amidst this domestic misfortune, Augustus consoled himself with the society and attachment of his grandsons, whom, though he checked their eagerness for official honors, he wished to introduce into political life. Livia viewed, with discontent, his increasing affection for these young men, and hoped to find opportunities of blasting their prospects. In the mean time, she dissembled her malevolence, and seemed to follow the inclinations of her

8 Sueton. *Vit. Tiberii*, cap. 10, 11.—*Paterc. lib. ii. cap. 99.*

9 Sueton. *Vit. Augusti*, cap. 65.—When she had passed five comfortless years on this island, she was sent to Rhegium, where she was treated with less rigor. After the death of Augustus, she was deprived of the common necessities of life by the vindictive malignity of Tiberius, and perished in extreme misery. *Tacitus.*

lord. While she anxiously wished to secure the imperial succession for her son, she would not suffer a hint of her ambitious views to escape. She artfully managed the disposition of the uxorious emperor; and, while she affected an implicit submission to his will, she so far governed him as to prevent the interest of Tiberius and his friends from being annihilated or seriously impaired.

By a partial writer of Roman history, the retreat of Tiberius is represented as so highly important, that its effects were immediately felt over the whole Roman world<sup>10</sup>. The Parthians (he says), shaking off their late alliance, took possession of Armenia; and Germany, when her conqueror turned away his eyes, rebelled. This is the language of flattery, rather than of strict truth. If the Parthians invaded Armenia some years after the departure of Tiberius from Rome, they would in all probability have taken the same step if he had remained; for, though he was not a contemptible warrior, his military fame was not so high, as to excite very terrific ideas. With regard to Germany, it appears that he was the imperfect conqueror of only a small part of the country; and the rebellion, said to have broken out soon after his retreat, seems to have been either imaginary or of very little moment.

Ante Chr. For the recovery of Armenia, Caius was sent against the Parthians; and he seems to have executed his commission with little difficulty. No collision of arms occurred between him and Phraates. The king, hearing of the arrival of Caius in Syria, and suspecting that his own subjects would take advantage of a foreign war to manifest their discontent, resolved to negotiate; and an interview took place on the banks of the Euphrates. It was agreed, that the Parthians should relinquish all



authority in Armenia, and that their alliance with Rome should be confirmed <sup>11</sup>.

While the effect of this accommodation subsisted, Tiberius returned to Italy. One of the friends of Caius, aware of the malignant jealousy of his step-father, promised to go to Rhodes, and bring away the head of the mischievous exile: but this offer was not accepted. Thinking that he should be more secure at Rome, he importuned the emperor for permission to return. His mother seconding the application with all her influence, Augustus declared himself willing to comply with the request, if Caius should not oppose it; and the recall was conceded, on condition of the abstinence of Tiberius from political intrigues and concerns <sup>12</sup>.

The two young men who stood between him and the throne, did not long obstruct his acquisition of political power. While they lived, he observed his promise of forbearance. Lucius died on his way to the camp in Spain; and Caius, being treacherously wounded in Armenia <sup>13</sup>, where new commotions had arisen, was escorted to the Lycian province, and did not live to reach Italy <sup>14</sup>. It is uncertain whether the machinations of Tiberius and Livia shortened the lives of the brothers: but the suspicion is rendered probable by the artful ambition of the mother and the unrelenting cruelty of the son.

The influence of Livia was now more openly exerted, than it had ever before been, in favor of her son. There was another rival in the person of young Agrippa, whom it did not seem convenient to remove at present from the world. He and Tiberius were publicly adopted by Augustus; and, when the former had been banished from the court for his low propensities and

<sup>11</sup> Di. Cass. lib. iv. cap. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Sueton. Vit. Tiberii, cap. 13.

<sup>13</sup> By an Armenian or Parthian commandant, or a suborned emissary, on pretence of a conference.

<sup>14</sup> Paterc. lib. ii. cap. 102.—Tacit. Annal. lib. i.—Sueton. Vit. Aug. cap. 65.



roughness of demeanor, the latter was invested with a participation of the tribunitian power.<sup>15</sup>

The imposing strength of the government did not deter Cinna, a grandson of Pompey the Great, from conspiring with other mal-contented against the emperor.<sup>16</sup> The plot was opportunely detected; and Augustus was so pleased at his escape, that he resolved not to inflict capital punishment upon any of the conspirators: but he would probably have banished some of them, if Livia had not exhorted him to pardon the whole number. He yielded to her solicitations, and dismissed with a mere reprimand all who had been apprehended, and even promoted Cinna to the consular dignity. This clemency so conciliated his adversaries, that no farther machinations of the same kind occurred during his reign.<sup>16</sup>

In consequence of the emperor's attention to the preservation of peace, the temple of Janus had been shut;<sup>17</sup> after the negotiation of Caius with the Parthian king: but it was re-opened on the revival of an insurrective spirit in Germany. Vinicius obtained reputation by his military conduct in that country; and Tiberius, being sent to assume the command, was not unsuccessful in his operations. In two campaigns, he reduced several states to submission<sup>18</sup>; and, in the third, he was preparing to attack the Marcomanni, when the revolt of the Pannonians and the Dalmatians, called him to the southward of the Danube.

A. D. 6. Taxation and other acts of power excited loud complaints; and the success of a party of Dalmatians over a small Roman force tended to diffuse the spirit of insurrection. Bato, who commanded the victorious party,

<sup>15</sup> Tacit. lib. i.—Sueton. Vit. Tiberii, cap. 15, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lv. cap. 14, 15.

<sup>17</sup> In the first year of the Christian era.

<sup>18</sup> Paterculus, to exalt the fame of his hero, enlarges the number of subjected states, and absurdly boasts of a triumphant progress over all Germany; while Dio coolly observes, that nothing memorable was performed on that occasion.

was wounded in an action near Salona; while a Pannonian chieftain of the same name was repulsed at Sirmium and pursued to the Drave; but the revolters, not discouraged, hazarded other conflicts, and committed furious ravages upon the lands of all who adhered to the Romans. With Tiberius they had no encounter in this campaign; but, while he was inactive, they invaded Macedonia, where they were checked by the spirit of the Thracians.

In the same year, Cornelius Cossus was more successful over the Getulians, who had rebelled against their king Juba, than Tiberius was over the European revolters. He so totally defeated them, that they submitted to his terms, and ceased to disturb the government. Triumphant honors and an appropriate surname were assigned to him for his exploits.

Augustus lamented the continuance of the revolt in Pannonia and Dalmatia, and blamed Tiberius for the feebleness of his operations against the enemies of Rome. Expecting a greater degree of zeal and activity from Germanicus, the promising son of Drusus, he sent him with additional troops to the scene of action, as an assistant to his uncle. The army employed <sup>A. D. 7.</sup> against the insurgents amounted (it is said) to fifteen legions, beside auxiliaries;—a force seemingly adequate to the immediate suppression of the revolt: yet no great exploits signalled the campaign. Both parties labored under a scarcity of provisions; and, indeed, the same dearth had for some time prevailed also in Italy. The contagion of disease, being added to the miseries of famine,

19 In one of these, according to Paterculus, Messalinus, governor of Illyria, with an incomplete legion, routed 20,000 of the enemy; and, in an other, five legions under Cæcina were in danger of being overwhelmed, while the Thracians, with their king Rhœmetalcès, were chased from the field; but the Romans at length retrieved their honor, and secured the victory. Dio seems to refer to the former engagement, when he speaks of the defeat of Bato the Dalmatian by Messalinus, who had, not long before, been unsuccessful in the field.

20 Sueton. Vit. Tiberii, cap. 16.

relaxed the firmness of some of the rebel communities ; and, after the reduction of a strong town by Germanicus, they sued for peace. In a conference with Tiberius, Bato, being questioned with regard to his motive for rebellion, replied, " The cause may be found in the injustice or the inadvertency of the emperor, who, instead of sending men or dogs to guard his flock, sent wolves among us." The general, without exhibiting any marks of displeasure, granted peace to a brave enemy<sup>21</sup>.

Bato the Pannonian, for betraying a brother chieftain to the Romans, received their permission to govern the Breuci as a vassal prince : but, being suddenly attacked by the other Bato, he was defeated and put to death. In Pannonia, the rebellion declined ; and, by the ulterior exertions of the legionaries, the whole country was reduced to a state of tranquillity. But, in Dalmatia, a great number of the people continued in arms ; and Tiberius, who had been recalled, was again sent to reclaim them to subordination. Dividing his army into three parts, he consigned one division to the conduct of Silanus, appointed Lepidus to the command of another, and, accompanied by Germanicus, marched with the third against Bato. The two former generals met with speedy success ; but the desultory movements of the chieftain long disappointed Tiberius. He was at length blocked up in a mountainous fortress near Salonæ, where he remained until he found an opportunity of safe retreat. His countrymen continued to defend the castle ; but the besiegers, mounting the steep, slew many of them, and suffered the rest to capitulate. Other fortified posts were taken by Germanicus and Vibius ; and the war was closed with the voluntary surrender of Bato<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lv. cap. 23, 24.

<sup>22</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lv. et lvi.—Paterc. lib. li. cap. 115, 116.—Suetonius says, that Tiberius highly favored and liberally rewarded Bato, for having suffered him to escape when he was entangled in an unfavorable situation. He calls him the Pannonian instead of the Dalmatian.



The triumphal processions and ceremonies decreed for this success were delayed by disastrous intelligence. In various parts of Germany, not actually provinciated, many Romans resided, not only soldiers but individuals of other classes and descriptions. They formed colonies and built towns, and maintained a friendly intercourse with the natives, who, being gradually led to an imitation of the Roman arts and manners, remained quiet, while they were treated with moderation and humanity: but, when Quintilius Varus, who thought more of plunder than of conciliation, arrived among them, after the oppression and impoverishment of Syria, he disgusted them by extortion and rapacity. Their murmurs (for they did not openly complain) did not escape the notice of their chieftains, among whom Arminius was distinguished by his courage and talents; and he secretly formed a strong confederacy against the Romans. It was resolved that artifice should be tried, as a prelude to the employment of force. Varus, being amused with professions of respect and promises of full submission, so far discarded all suspicion, that he sent different parts of his army among the weaker states, whose leaders affected a wish for Roman protection. When his force was thus divided, some distant communities rose in arms, in concert with the confederate chiefs, who hoped to crush Varus in his march through districts which he supposed to be occupied by friends. The general was warned by some of his officers of the danger that might attend his advance; and Segestes, who, though the father-in-law of Arminius, was at variance with that chieftain, gave intimations of clandestine intrigues<sup>23</sup>. Incredulous and incautious, Varus began his march in a disorderly manner, with three legions and six cohorts; and, in passing through a woody country near the Lippe, he was harassed by a numerous army of Germans, first in desul-

<sup>23</sup> Tacit. Annal. lib. i.—Paterc.

tory and distant hostility, and afterward in close conflict. For three days, the legionaries marched and fought, sustaining much greater loss than they inflicted. At length the general, despairing of safety, slew himself: his chief officers, and many of their men, also rushed into suicide; and very few, out of the whole Roman force, escaped death or captivity.<sup>24</sup>

(This misfortune seemed to affect Augustus more sensibly, than any former incident in his public or private life. He tore his robe, and repeatedly dashed his head, in an agony of grief, against the door of his apartment, crying out, "Quintilius Varus, restore my legions!"<sup>25</sup>) He suffered his hair and beard to grow to an enormous length, and seemed, for a time, to have renounced the pleasures of life and the joys of society. Yet he did not wholly neglect the functions of government, or the duties of his high station; and, for the national defence, he was uncommonly earnest and diligent in levying a new army. As very few voluntarily offered themselves, he was so displeased at this want of zeal, that he stigmatised and impoverished every fifth man of those who were under thirty-five years of age, and every tenth man of those who had reached or exceeded that age; and, forgetting the clemency which he had usually manifested since he had attained the plenitude of power, he put to death some who were still unwilling to enlist.<sup>26</sup>

Arminius was not so elate with his success, as to venture to pass the Rhine; and, when Tiberius was sent with fresh legions into Germany, the chieftain did not  
A. D. 10. risk a general conflict. Ravages and irregular hostilities marked the continuance of the war. The great caution of Tiberius precluded a repetition of the calamitous scene of the preceding year; and it also dissuaded

<sup>24</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lvi. cap. 7. — Patere. lib. ii. cap. 117—119. — Sueton. Vit. Augusti.

<sup>25</sup> Sueton. cap. 23.

<sup>26</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lvi. cap. 8.

him from aiming at the subjugation of the German states. In another campaign, he and the enemy were equally cautious.

After his return to Rome, Tiberius triumphed for his success in Pannonia and Dalmatia. Before he reached the Capitol in his splendid procession,

A. D. 12.

he descended from his car, and threw himself at the emperor's feet with all the marks of exterior respect. He then entertained the citizens at a thousand tables, and gratified every one with a pecuniary present<sup>27</sup>. His nephew, whom, at the desire of Augustus, he had reluctantly adopted for his son, was at this time consul; and, when his office expired, he was sent to overawe the Germans.

The aged emperor, whose health visibly declined, now began to withdraw himself, in a great degree, from public affairs: yet he accepted, from the compliant senate, an offer of the sovereignty for another decennial

A. D. 13.

term. He requested that the assembly would allow him twenty counsellors; and it was voted, that all the resolutions which he might adopt in concert with these statesmen, with the consuls actual and elect, and his own relatives, should be as obligatory upon the nation, as if they had been decreed by the senate<sup>28</sup>.

Although the presence of the *heir apparent* (for so Tiberius might be termed) seemed to be necessary at Rome, on account of the ill state of health to which Augustus was reduced, he commenced his journey into Illyria,

A. D. 14.

at the emperor's request. In all probability, however, he did not intend to remain long absent. Livia had promised to give him intelligence of every incident or circumstance that he might wish to know at this important crisis; and he could not have a more faithful guardian of his interests.

In the opinion of a superstitious people, the emperor's

<sup>27</sup> Sueton. Vit. Tiberii, cap. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lvi. cap. 17.



approaching death was announced by various prodigies, too ridiculous to be gravely noticed or particularised by a modern writer<sup>29</sup>. Being desirous of accompanying Tiberius to Beneventum, he quitted Rome amidst the importunities of litigants (who urged him to expedite the decision of their causes); and visited some of the isles of Campania, indulging himself for four days at Caprea in entertainments and diversions. Having dismissed his political associate, he returned, and drooped at Nola. He instantly countermanded the Illyrian journey of Tiberius, who, soon arriving at Nola, had an interview with his imperial patron. His illness increasing, he abstained from all public business, and calmly resigned himself to his fate. Some of his friends being admitted into his chamber, he asked whether they did not think that he had decently performed his part on the stage of life, and requested them, as spectators of the drama, to applaud his exit<sup>30</sup>. He expired in the arms of Livia, for whom his last words expressed an affectionate regard. She did not deserve his affection; if it be true that she hastened his death by giving him fruit which she had poisoned, from an apprehension of his being induced to prefer his grandson Agrippa to her son, as a candidate for the imperial dignity; but the report of such an enormity is a mere surmise, which cannot at this distance of time be either substantiated or disproved<sup>31</sup>.

In the will of the deceased prince, Tiberius and his mother were named his chief heirs; and pecuniary distri-

29 Beside an eclipse of the sun and the appearance of comets, we find mention of the fall of burning wood from the sky, the erasure (by lightening) of the first letter of his name from an inscription upon a statue, and the screeching of an owl on the senate-house, the doors of which were unanimously found shut, when a meeting had been appointed to offer prayers for the preservation of so valuable a life. The literal portent was curiously explained by the augurs. It was said, that, after the expiration of a hundred days (C), he would become *ÆSAR*, that is, in the Etrurian language, a God.

30 Sueton. Vit. Aug. cap. 99.

31 The rumor is mentioned by Dio and Tacitus, who do not pretend either to confirm or to controvert it.

butions were ordered among the citizens of Rome and the soldiers. He left four other rolls, or small volumes. In one of these, he gave directions respecting his funeral; the second contained a summary of the most remarkable transactions of his life and reign; the third was a statement of the number of men under arms, as well as of the contents of the treasury; and, in the fourth, he advised his successor to make choice of good ministers, and neither aim at tyranny, nor seek the extension of the empire<sup>32</sup>.

Augustus was, by nature, selfish, cold, unfeeling; capable of perpetrating the greatest enormities without hesitation or remorse, whenever such acts seemed to promise success to his views, or gratification to his interest; and, if his difficulties and dangers in the pursuit of power had subsisted longer than the weakness of his opponents suffered them to continue, he would probably have prolonged his barbarities with the most inhuman perseverance. But, when he had attained the great object of his ambition, his good sense and philosophy taught him, that it was more honorable, as well as more expedient, to govern with equity and moderation, than to exercise the rigors and cruelties of a tyrant. He acted, indeed, as the lord of the empire; but he exhibited himself in the light of a kind and beneficent master, rather than in that of a severe and malignant despot. He distributed justice with impartiality, and tempered it's decisions with mercy. He vigilantly superintended the complicated concerns of his extensive dominions, and provided for the regular government of the most distant provinces. The rich were not suffered to oppress the poor; who, in other respects, were gratified with an amelioration of their state. While the elegant arts were fostered by imperial taste, the monarch of the Roman world paid greater attention to the accommodations and comforts of the people, than the rulers of the republic had been accustomed to bestow.



A prince whose sway was so equitable, and whose moderation was so exemplary, was a natural object of courtly and poetic flattery. Even the worst princes have been complimented with splendid panegyric; and we therefore need not be surprised at the profusion of praise that was bestowed upon Augustus. The idea of treating him as a God was, indeed, an instance of irreverence to the established objects of worship, and was inconsistent with that practice of antiquity which only elevated deceased heroes and patriots to the rank of deities or demi-gods<sup>33</sup>. As a wise prince, he doubtless preferred the honorable title of *parens patriæ* to that of a God, being conscious that he was a mere man, subject to all the frailties and weaknesses of our nature.

#### LETTER IV.

*A View of the Roman Religion, Manners, Learning, and Arts, from the Elevation of ROMULUS to the Death of AUGUSTUS CESAR.*

THE first inhabitants of Rome were not in so low a state of barbarism as were the primary colonists of Greece. They were chiefly of Grecian origin; and many had enjoyed the benefit of Etrurian civilisation. Refinement, however, had not made any great advances among them: their manners were coarse and rude, and their attainments were not very considerable.

That religion which Romulus planted on the banks of the Tiber, corresponded with the Grecian system. A

<sup>33</sup> Horace says,—*presens divus habebitur Augustus*; our emperor shall be deemed a God while living;—and altars were erected to the deified potentate, whom the people had long revered as the father of his country.



plurality of divine beings, graciously superintending human concerns, formed the prevailing creed. All the deities had priests and ministers, sacrifices and oblations. The augurs, in whose art or imposture the founder of Rome excelled, were considered as an important and necessary part of the establishment. Each tribe had one of these pretended prophets, who announced the will of the Gods with regard to any future enterprise, from an observance of the flight or the noise of birds, from the feeding of poultry, the movements of beasts, and from other appearances. Romulus also introduced *aruspices*, who attended the altars, and made a variety of observations connected with the sacrifices, deducing favorable or adverse omens. The high priest and his chief associates not only regulated the public worship, but acted as judges in all cases which had reference to religion, and exercised a censorial and authoritative jurisdiction over inferior ministers. When the republican government was instituted, a new priest was added to the sacred fraternity: he was styled *rex sacrorum*, and was next in rank and dignity to the high priest.

A remarkable order of priests arose in the reign of Numa. When a pestilence had made furious ravages, a brazen buckler was produced, which, the king pretended, had been sent from Heaven to indicate the divine will for the cessation of the disease. He ordered eleven others to be made exactly in the same form, that any one who might profanely wish to steal the sacred target might not be able to distinguish it from the rest. These weapons were consigned to the care of twelve priests, called *Salii*, who occasionally carried the bucklers about Rome, singing as they passed'. Being considered as the priests of Mars, the *Salii* were highly respected by a warlike na-

tion, and were permitted, as luxury advanced, to fare sumptuously when their festivals recurred.

The Corybantes, or priests of Cybele, were introduced into Rome at a much later period. They were Phrygian eunuchs, who danced in armour, shouting and howling, and playing upon a variety of instruments. This establishment was recommended by the Sibylline oracles, to which the Romans, from the time of Tarquin the Proud, paid a reverential regard. An unknown old woman having sold to that prince the books of the Sibyls, which, she assured him, contained the most important predictions, he ordered them to be carefully preserved in the Capitol; and they were inspected in critical times, for the guidance of the senate and people<sup>2</sup>. That the contents of these volumes were compounds of absurdity, we may easily believe; but, as they served to delude the multitude, they were considered as useful by the ruling power.

Into the priesthood of Cybele, under her name of Vesta, females had been admitted from the time of Numa. They were expected to retain, for thirty years, the virgin purity, with which they entered into that profession. They guarded the sacred fire, which was supposed to be intimately connected with the origin of all things, and carefully prevented its extinction<sup>3</sup>. By the people they were treated with reverence; and, in imploring pardon or mercy, their intercession was attended with peculiar efficacy. They did not live in seclusion, like the nuns of Christian times; but were allowed to appear in public, and even to be present at the sports and games. Their number did not exceed six; and it was so difficult to supply the few vacancies which occurred, that it became customary for

<sup>2</sup> Dionys. Halicarn. lib. iv.

<sup>3</sup> The institution of this sisterhood was borrowed from the city of Alba; but the practice of keeping up a perpetual fire was prevalent in Egypt, Persia, and Greece.



the high priest to take novices by force. The repugnance to a voluntary initiation principally arose from the horrible punishment which was annexed to a violation of the Vestal vow of chastity. The unfortunate delinquent was conducted in melancholy procession to a suburban field, and buried alive<sup>4</sup>; while her lover, tied to a stake, was scourged to death. It does not appear that many suffered during a course of ages. Few citizens were eager to adduce a charge which tended to inflict a cruel death for an act of frailty; and even the priests were not vigilant in guarding the honor of Vesta, however ominous to the welfare of the state such a deviation from corporal and mental purity might seem in the opinion of zealots.

Beside the revenue which the Vestal virgins received from the government, they occasionally derived considerable legacies from individual respect and devotion, and were thus enabled to live in that luxury which did not comport with the reputed sanctity of their characters. The public exigencies sometimes led to the seizure of a portion of their property; but the rulers of the state were not so sacrilegiously profane as to reduce them to poverty.

The sacrifices in which the different priests officiated did not agree in every particular; but the following usages and ceremonies were the most prevalent. When a sacrifice was intended, a solemn procession was made to the temple of some deity. In the first place, a *præco* or crier called the attention of the people to the pious work; then appeared the flute-players and harpers, performing in their best manner; the victims followed, wearing white fillets, with their horns gilt. As soon as the priest reached the altar, he prayed to the Gods, imploring pardon for his sins, and a blessing upon his country. Having commanded the exclusion of impure and vicious persons, he threw grain, meal, and frankincense, upon the heads of the ani-

<sup>4</sup> Plut. Vit. Numæ.



mals, and poured wine between the horns of each ; and, when he had scored them on the back, he directed his attendants to kill them. The entrails were closely inspected, and, from their particular appearance, omens were deduced or inferred, as if the Gods intimated their will, by such *minutiae*, to sagacious and devout observers. Some portions of the flesh were then placed upon the altar, for the gratification of that God to whose honor the temple had been reared. The remains served for more substantial nutriment, being divided among the attendant votaries.

Music formed a part of the Roman ritual as early as the reign of Romulus. The instrumental department of the art, in Italy, had been improved by the Arcadians who arrived with Evander ; for it was not wholly unknown at the time of his disembarkation, the pastoral pipe being then used in that part of the country in which he settled. Long before the foundation of Rome, the Etrurians also were proficient in music ; and, as Romulus was educated among them, he would probably have introduced it into his new city, if all his followers had been unacquainted with it. It was practised in religious ceremonies and processions, hymns being sung to the tones of the flute, sometimes amidst the percussion of cymbals : and it served to enliven the triumphs of that prince and his successors. The Salii, by an ordinance of Numa, added dancing to the hymns which they sang in honor of Mars. After a slow progression of the musical art, the establishment of the drama promoted it's cultivation : yet it was scarcely introduced into domestic life before the Romans had extended their foreign connexions by their success in Asia Minor. Female singers and lyristes were thenceforward frequently employed at entertainments to amuse the company ; and it became a mark of taste to admire their exertions and performances. The reduction of Greece under the Roman sway afforded another opportunity for the

improvement of music at Rome ; but even in the refined age of Augustus, there were very few Romans who acquired fame as musicians. As Grecian painters and sculptors were chiefly employed in public or private works of art, so the composers, singers, and instrumental performers, of Greece or of the Asiatic provinces, were deemed most worthy of encouragement.

Of the festivals which were periodically solemnised by the Romans, the Lupercalia and the Saturnalia seem to have been the most remarkable. The Luperci, or priests of Pan, formed the earliest sacerdotal order in the Roman state. When these ministers had sacrificed some white goats in the temple of the rustic God, they smeared the faces of two boys of noble birth with the blood of the animals, and then wiped off the stains with wool dipped in milk. Furnished with thongs from the skins of the victims, the boys ran naked about the city, and lashed the young women, who did not endeavour to avoid those gentle touches which were supposed to promote fecundity<sup>5</sup>. The Saturnalia, at first, did not extend beyond one day ; but Augustus gratified the people with two additional days of sport and festivity. In commemoration of the peaceful and happy age in which Saturn flourished, nothing but joy and harmony pervaded this festival. No serious business was allowed ; all kinds of amusement and indulgence prevailed ; and a distinguishing feature of the celebrity was the custom which elevated the lowest servants to a temporary equality with their masters, who patiently bore the freedom of remark, and even the keenness of sarcasm<sup>6</sup>.

Among the sacred games, some were as ancient as the reign of Romulus : these were the *ludi Compitalitii* and *Consuales*. Others were added at different times ; particularly, those of Tarquin the Elder, in honor of Jupiter,

<sup>5</sup> Plut. Vit. Romuli.

<sup>6</sup> Luciani Saturnal.



Juno, and Minerva; the *ludi Capitolini*, in commemoration of the defence of the Capitol against the Gauls; and those which expressed the devotion of the citizens to Mars, Apollo, Cybele, Ceres, and Flora. The first of these celebrities consisted of rustic sports; during which, the figures of the *Lares* or household gods were crowned with flowers, and sacrifices were offered in the *compita* or streets. The *Consuales* were so called from *Consus*,—a deity framed by Romulus for a temporary purpose<sup>7</sup>, and represented as the god of counsel or policy. Horse-races were the chief amusements at this solemnity. Wrestling, leaping, the skilful discharge of the javelin, and various trials of robust and dexterous superiority, concurred with sacrifices in giving attraction to the other anniversary exhibitions, except such as were connected with the worship of Cybele and Flora; in the former of which, scenic sports superseded the ordinary diversions, while, in the latter, naked prostitutes amused the people by agility of movement, ludicrous gesticulation, and vulgar mimicry.

The secular games were intended to recur once in a century; but the exact time was not strictly regarded. In one of the Sibylline volumes, it was declared, in the assumed spirit of prophesy, that, if the Romans would honor the principal deities with splendid spectacles and games at the commencement of every century, their power and dominion would be remarkably extensive and permanent. In consequence of this flattering intimation, the centurial games were instituted<sup>8</sup>. The blood of victims flowed on some altars, and the produce of the earth more innocently graced others. Hymns were sung by matrons, boys, and girls; and, during three days, diversified sports attended the solemnity. The fifth secular celebrity was exhibited by Augustus, who also established

<sup>7</sup> The rape of the Sabines.

<sup>8</sup> The time of the institution is disputed: but it seems to have been in the 456th year before Christ.



quinquennial games to commemorate his victory at Actium, and ordered a variety of sports in every tenth year, when he practised the farce of resignation, and readily resumed that exorbitant power of which he pretended to be weary.

The games which enlivened the festivals were exhibited at other times in the *Circus*,—which was properly a circular, but sometimes an oblong building, enclosing a spacious area for varied sports. Among these were the chariot-races and the combats with wild beasts, which, however different in point of humanity, were viewed with equal transport. The beasts fought with each other, or with men, either criminals or mercenaries. Cæsar gratified the people with a battle between five hundred men and twenty elephants, and with an engagement still more striking, maintained by the same number of elephants, each having on it's back a turret defended by sixty men, against a thousand horsemen and pedestrians.

When the Romans had acquired some degree of naval skill, they added aquatic contests to their former amusements. An extensive edifice surrounded a channel sufficiently capacious for the evolutions of a considerable number of galleys. Sometimes the conductors merely contended for quickness of motion: at other times, they had regular naval engagements, in which blood was shed for the gratification of the unfeeling spectators.

Nothing can more strongly evince that brutality which, even in the progress of refinement, never deserted the Roman character, than the institution and continuance of gladiatorial combats. Such exhibitions could only please a nation which had a strong tincture of ferocity. It has been supposed that the custom of killing prisoners or slaves at the funeral of princes and heroes, or of compelling them to contend with each other in mortal con-

flicts, gave rise to the disgraceful establishment of gladiators; but, in all probability, the fondness of the Romans for war, without reference to the practice of honoring the memory of a great man by human sacrifices, produced the infamous institution. Two citizens of the family of Brutus were the introducers of the custom<sup>10</sup>. They exhibited three pairs of gladiators, out of respect to the memory of their father; and the example was not only followed by other heirs, but even by many of the annual magistrates. The vanquished combatants did not always lose their lives; for the people would sometimes interfere in their behalf, and save them by opportune signals from the fury of the victors. It was, at first, customary to employ criminals on these occasions<sup>11</sup>, or slaves; and, in the latter case, even trivial offences were deemed sufficient to justify an exposure of a fellow-creature to the risque of death; but citizens who had not committed any crime, and who wished to signalise their courage and address, were at length induced to enter the lists; and regular schools of gladiators were formed. They did not all fight in the same mode, or with the same weapons. Some were completely armed: others had only a trident, and a net for entangling the opposite combatant. Liberty was the usual reward of a slave who triumphed in one or more contests. A freeman received a pecuniary recompense; and, when he had frequently prevailed, he was permitted to separate himself from the fraternity, and to enjoy in repose the fame which he had acquired. These combats were sometimes introduced at entertainments, to enliven the scene of festivity. Guests who could be thus amused, may be thought to have been only elevated by one degree above the character of cannibals.

The private amusements of the Romans are not un-

<sup>10</sup> Cicero de Senectute, lib. ii. c. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Ciceronis Quæst. Tusc. lib. ii.



worthy of notice.<sup>12</sup> All nations feel the necessity of occasional recreation; but some difference in the objects of choice, and in the degree of their attachment to pastimes, with patently occur. Various modes of playing with balls are mentioned: one depended on the triangular position of three persons, who sent the ball to each other, stigmatising as the loser the first who let it fall. The quoit was frequently thrown for private diversions; and not only boys, but young men, were fond of playing with a hoop, the interior side of which was furnished with rings. A game resembling chess, and consequently requiring skill, has been attributed to the Romans; and it also appears that they were particularly pleased with games of hazard. Dice were shaken and thrown out of a long box, as in modern times; and the results were watched with remarkable eagerness. Augustus was attached to this species of amusement; but its general prevalence was prohibited by laws.<sup>13</sup> The manners of the earlier Romans were marked with simplicity, — not the coarseness of barbarism, but the plainness of honesty. Not being ashamed either of their sentiments or of their conduct, they avoided, as useless and degrading, all artifice and dissimulation. They did not suffer their desires to transgress the bounds of moderation: satisfied with the mere supply of their physical wants, they were not tempted to rush into excess, or eager to devise the varied means of indulgence; and, while they thus practised the virtues of temperance and continence, they did not boast of their forbearance, as if they thought themselves entitled to praise, when their merit was only negative. Yet, as this part of their cha-

<sup>12</sup> Mr. Basil Kennet says, "We should not pass by the private sports and diversions; not that they are worth our notice in themselves, but because many passages and allusions in authors would otherwise be very difficult to apprehend." Many readers, however, may be of opinion, that these points are deserving of record in themselves, inasmuch as they tend to display the character of a nation.



character principally arose from firmness of mind; it reflected indisputable credit upon the nation.

They were attentive to decorum; respectful to their superiors, but not servilely submissive; civil in their demeanor, if not polite in their address. They were not absolutely unfriendly; but they had neither warmth of attachment nor tenderness of sympathy. In their paternal capacity, they were not so kind and acquiescent as they were stern and haughty: in the characters of husbands and masters, they were disposed to be arbitrary and imperious. That hardihood which was generated by their political zeal, gradually entered into their social composition, and marked their portrait with harsh lines.

Their rigidity of character they preserved for ages; and it was communicated even to the women, who were thus, in a great measure, divested of that softness and suavity which ought to distinguish their sex. There was still a visible distinction of manners; but the females were bold and masculine in their deportment. To Roman lovers, this circumstance was probably a strong recommendation in early times, when a refined taste and delicacy of sentiment did not prevail on the banks of the Tiber: but the progress of arts, and even the advance of luxury, tended to introduce grace and elegance.

Upon that rampart of temperance and frugality which secured the probity of the Roman character, no practicable breach seems to have been made before the arms of the republic prospered in Asia. But, soon after Antiochus had been humbled, the varied pleasures and dissolute indulgences of Ionia, Lydia, and Syria, allured even the Romans to imitation; and relaxations of the ancient system were gradually introduced. Every species of voluptuous gratification,—whatever could flatter the senses or please man, considered as an animal, while the intellect was dormant or unemployed,—crept into use and practice. But luxury did not reach it's destined height, nor

did the decline of morality proceed to the utmost excess of depravity, before the death of Augustus, whose censorial authority and powerful influence checked, for a time, the progress of degeneracy. That prince was not, indeed, a model of purity<sup>13</sup>; but he attended, with seeming anxiety, to the preservation of correct morals<sup>14</sup>. The majority of his successors were, in that respect, less strict and vigilant.

An innocent species of luxury was that which depended upon dress and personal ornament. The plainness of the ancient apparel gave way, after the establishment of connexions with Asia, to a fondness for elegant attire, among persons of the higher class. It does not appear that the earliest Romans, as some have said, were content with the skins of beasts; but, even if they were, a woollen *toga* or gown, full for the rich, and scanty for the poor, soon became the distinctive dress of the nation, as was the *pallium* or cloke of the Greeks. A tunic, which, like the gown, was sleeveless, was afterward brought into use. It was at first short, like a waistcoat; but it was gradually lengthened<sup>15</sup>. It subsequently received the addition of sleeves, and was fastened by a belt. That which the women wore reached the feet; while the men suffered it to end at the knees. These garments were intended to be worn together; but the most indigent of the people frequently used the tunic as a substitute for the gown. In the progress of refinement, females had three garments.

13 He was sober and temperate, but so unchaste, that he is said to have even employed Livia in the selection of new objects of amorous gratification.

14 Sueton. *Vit. Augusti*, cap. 32, 34, 39, 40.

15 Some classical antiquaries have expressed their surprise, that the Romans had no apparel corresponding with our breeches: but did not the tunic, by surrounding the body from the shoulders to the knees, answer the purpose of our waistcoat and small-clothes?—For ages, they had no stockings; but at length they put bands of stuff, and sometimes of silk, round their legs. As the feet more particularly required some species of covering, shoes and slippers were in early use: the women preferred sandals; and the shoes of the patricians were distinguished by a half-moon wrought in ivory.



One served for a *chemise*; the next was more ample in it's dimensions; and the third, called the *stola*, still more fully enveloped the form. The last was richly ornamented in the latter times of the republican government, being curiously embroidered, and fastened with clasps of gold. By the use of the *stola*, the feminine *toga* was transferred to women of loose character<sup>16</sup>.

The senators were distinguished by a tunic, which had broad studs or knobs<sup>17</sup> worked into it; while the knights had narrow studs, and the common people were not allowed to use such an ornament. The kings wore a white robe, decorated with a purple border and protuberances of scarlet. The emperors, in their public appearance, used one entirely of purple. Triumphant generals wore a robe adorned with various representations in embroidery, resembling the labors of the pencil: hence it was called *toga picta*. Both this and the *prætexa* were borrowed from the Etrurians. The latter was edged with purple, and was not only worn by magistrates, and on solemn occasions by all senators, but also by boys of the superior class, and by unmarried women.

Like the Greeks, the Romans were not accustomed to wear hats or caps, whenever they appeared in the open air: but, at sacrifices, festivals, and games, or in a long journey, many wore a woollen or leathern cap; and, when slaves had been manumitted, they were indulged with the constant use of the *pilleus*, as an indication of the freedom which they had acquired.

At the entertainments of early and frugal times, no other than the ordinary dress was used: but, as luxury advanced, a peculiar habit, light and easy, was brought into use at convivial meetings. Sitting was the primitive posture at meals. Couches were afterward introduced; which,

16 Jol. Laurent de Ro Vestiarie, cap. I.

17 The Jesuit Cantel maintains, that these protuberances were merely purple flowers interwoven in the cloth, but rising above the surface.



however, were long confined to the men, for the women were too modest to eat or drink in a position which had the appearance of indecency, until the re-iterated persuasions and established practice of the less delicate sex overcame their scruples. The grand meal answered to our supper; and, when the master of the house had invited friends, it consisted of one course of light food, and another of more substantial fare, beside a copious *dessert*.

In the times of Pompey and Cæsar, a *bon vivant*, after supping with one party, would frequently go to another house, to finish the evening in a manner totally opposite to the moderation and temperance of an ancient Roman.

The matrimonial ceremony was usually attended with a liberal entertainment, which was sometimes repeated on the following day. Before marriage, the lover sent a ring to the fair object of his accepted addresses; and, when the contract had been adjusted, and the supposed consent of the Gods obtained by a reference to auspices, the head of the bride was decorated with flowers: her locks were divided by a javelin, to intimate, in all probability, that she belonged to a warlike nation: she assumed a veil, and marched forth by the light of torches, accompanied by three boys of reputable families, a distaff (the emblem of virgin industry) being carried before her. She was lifted over the threshold of her gallant, with a show of gentle compulsion; received from him the keys of the house; partook of the nuptial feast; and was thenceforward considered as a wife. A part of the previous formality was the mutual exchange of money. The more ceremonious kind of marriage was that which was solemnised by a priest with prayers and the offer of a wheaten cake to the Gods, in the presence of ten witnesses, before whom the fond couple tasted the offering. Sometimes a concubinage took place with the consent of the parents or guardians of a young woman; and, when it had continued for a

whole year, the connexion was deemed equivalent to a marriage; but it was obviously much less honorable.

The birth of a child was hailed as a fortunate incident: the infant was regarded as a precious gift from the Gods; and joy pervaded the paternal mansion. Yet there were many Romans who suffered their children, particularly females, to perish by exposure; and, for this flagrant inhumanity, they were, during a long period, not amenable to that public justice which their unnatural conduct might be supposed to have provoked<sup>18</sup>.

The funeral ceremonies of the Romans resembled those which prevailed among the Greeks. Whether the body should be burned or buried, was left to individual discretion; but the former was the more general custom. When the defunct was a person of rank or eminence, an oration was publicly pronounced over his remains; and the mention of this practice leads me to the consideration of the oratorical character of the Romans.

Before they excelled in general literature, they eagerly cultivated a bold and manly species of eloquence. Many of their early senators, magistrates, and military commanders, could harangue the citizens with perspicuity and force, so as generally to make the desired impression. That the speeches attributed by Livy to these statesmen and warriors are genuine, cannot be readily believed: but they serve to show the prevalence of oratory in the Roman state. Appius Claudius, the Blind, was considered by his contemporaries as an able speaker, although the critics of succeeding ages would not allow that he was a masterly orator. Scipio Nasica and Cato the Censor were the most eloquent men of their time<sup>19</sup>. Galba, the treacherous general, and Caius Carbo, were distinguished

<sup>18</sup> This practice was at length stigmatised by Valentinian I. as a crime which deserved the rigors of exemplary punishment.

<sup>19</sup> The former, says Victor, was *eloquentid primus*; the latter is called, by Pliny, *summus orator*.



speakers; one was stern and rough in his manner; the other had a flowing and musical eloquence. The younger Scipio spoke with weight and force, while his friend Lælius was a mild and smooth declaimer. Antonius and Lucius Crassus were still more eminent. Catulus claimed the praise of wit and elegance: Cotta was argumentative and correct; Sulpicius was vehement and energetic<sup>20</sup>.

The oratorical merits of Cicero were of the highest description. It was his opinion, that an orator was the greatest of human characters, and that all the wisdom of a philosopher, all the attainments of a scholar, and a general knowledge both of art and nature, were requisite to complete the portrait. By the union of splendid talents and indefatigable industry, he acquired the reputation of the best speaker in an age which abounded with eloquent men. He was fluent, animated, elegant: he attended to the minor beauties of verbal collocation and arrangement, and to harmony of period: he interested every auditor, and charmed all who were not implicated in his animadversions or exposed to his attacks; and, if he did not exhibit the condensation and compactness, or the vivid energy of Demosthenes, his diffusion was by no means feeble or vapid. If from the speeches of the Grecian orator no retrenchment could be hazarded, to those of the Roman it was not easy to make any effective addition.

Even if Cicero had not been an illustrious orator, his literary productions would have immortalised his name. His moral and miscellaneous works are highly and justly esteemed. They display acuteness, good sense, and learning; they are pregnant with instruction, as they supply us with maxims for the conduct of life; and their acknowledged utility is accompanied with the attractions of entertainment.

Among the eloquent contemporaries of Cicero, five are

<sup>20</sup> Cic. de Oratore, lib. iii. cap. 7, 8.



mentioned by an ancient writer<sup>21</sup> as pre-eminent. He has concisely characterised their different modes of oratory, each by a distinct epithet. Calvus was close and compact, Asinius Pollio had a modulated suavity, Cæsar was brilliant, Cœlius was sharp and poignant, Brutus was weighty and sedate. The oratory of Messala Corvinus is not so specifically marked by the same critic; but he appears to have been an impressive speaker, and to have cultivated the graces of language. To these admired speakers Hortensius may be added. He united erudition with sagacity, and had a pleasing and graceful delivery.

The abilities of pleaders were long exercised without a fee; for it was an object of ambition, among the young patricians, and other citizens who had received a good education, to appear as advocates. Presents, indeed, were sometimes accepted by a successful pleader; and, when an enlarged scale of expenditure had superseded the ancient frugality, fees were exacted for the exertions of forensic oratory. An express law prohibited the acceptance of any stipend for this task; but it was so frequently evaded, that Augustus enforced it by a severe penalty.

Poetry, being less useful, was much less cultivated than the art of elocution. No Roman, worthy of the name of a poet, flourished before the termination of the first Punic war. Some attempts, indeed, to amuse the public in verse, preceded that æra; but they were feeble and insignificant.

At the Saturnalia, the mirth of the festive party gave rise to effusions of raillery, in measured and rhythmical diction; and when, in consequence of pestilential havock, the superstition of the priests had recommended scenic amusements, as a novel kind of expiation for those sins which had aroused the indignation of the Gods, *ludiones*, or players, were invited from Etruria<sup>22</sup>, to pacify by their

<sup>21</sup> The unknown author of the dialogue *de Oratoribus*.

<sup>22</sup> In the 365th year before the birth of Christ.

performances the divine guardians of the republic: but it appears, that they did not sing or recite verses, or exhibit any other species of action than dancing to the sound of the flute. The Romans soon imitated the evolutions of these strangers; and, not content with mere saltation, introduced jocular and satirical verses<sup>23</sup>; but no regular Latin poems, either dramatic or narrative, were given to the world for 125 years from that period. After this interval, Livius Andronicus produced at Rome both tragic and comic pieces<sup>24</sup>. He was either a native of Greece, or of Grecian extraction; and being a faithful slave, had received the favor of emancipation. His contemporary, Nævius, wrote some comedies, which were performed with applause, and also exercised his talents in a description of the Punic war.

Ennius was both a dramatist and an heroic poet. He had genius and spirit; but his fragments betray a want of cultivation and of polish. Plautus excelled in delineations of character: his sallies of humor, and the neatness of his style, rendered his comedies amusing and attractive. Pacuvius and Accius, whose works are lost, courted the tragic Muse with success. Terence, who was a Carthaginian slave, delighted the Romans with his comedies, which were chiefly borrowed from Menander. His style is pure and elegant; his characters are faithful transcripts of nature; his pleasantry is unaffected; his axioms and moral hints are happily introduced. He was the esteemed friend of Scipio and Lælius, by whose taste and judgement, as his contemporaries supposed, his pieces were polished and improved. Afranius was also an ingenious votary of the comic Muse, and a happy imitator of Menander.

Lucilius distinguished himself as a satirist; but his rugged verses, and his irregularity of composition, dis-

<sup>23</sup> Liv. lib. vii. cap. 2.

<sup>24</sup> A. Gell. lib. xviii. cap. 21.—Cassiodori Chron.

gusted the refined critics of the Augustan age. Yet those who animadverted upon his defects, allowed that he surpassed Ennius as a poet.

The fame of Lucretius eclipsed the lustre of his predecessors. His talents were of the highest order; and his capacity was improved by a respectable portion of learning. Having studied philosophy at Athens, he was prompted, by his attachment to the Epicurean system, to write a poem upon the "nature of things." The subject was worthy of his genius; but, from his mode of treating it, he did not render it so generally attractive as it would have been, if he had not banished religion from his creed, and endeavoured to explode the idea of a divine creator and governor of the universe. The poem, however, was greatly admired by the Roman *literati*, and still inspires the reader with a high opinion of the poetic ability and mental vigor of its author. His diction, though sometimes harsh and uncouth, is frequently elegant and harmonious: his descriptions are vivid and picturesque: his views of visible nature are correct; and his Muse occasionally rises to grandeur and sublimity.

Virgil, if he did not rival Lucretius in the inventive faculty, excelled him in the happy choice of expressions, in elegance and dignity, in polished regularity and impressive magnificence. His pastorals are too refined for the manners of peasants, and are less natural than those of Theocritus: but, amidst the beauties with which they abound, the inconsistency is readily pardoned by every reader of taste. In the Georgics, an ordinary pursuit is ennobled by genius; and judicious rules are adorned with all the charms of poetry. The fable of the *Æneid* is well-conducted: the incidents are admirably related: the characters, in general, are well delineated: the divine interposition is supported by the rules of ancient criticism: the episodes are highly pleasing; and, if we do not perceive in the poem the fire and vigor of Homer, we meet with



forcible passages, instances of sublimity, and *traits* of nature and pathos.

Horace, the friend of Virgil, may not only be considered as one of the most pleasing, but also as one of the most instructive writers of antiquity. If his odes do not elevate us by sublimity, or transport us by magnificence and splendor of imagery, they at least excite agreeable sensations, and please by their general propriety of sentiment and elegance of expression. His satires are not indignantly severe or sharply censorious, but abound with pleasant raillery, lively animadversions, and humorous strictures. By his epistles we are taught to know ourselves, to think with propriety, act with prudence, and follow the laws of rectitude. His Art of Poetry has been censured as irregular and desultory : but it contains some good poetry, just criticism, pertinent remarks, and excellent precepts, particularly for dramatic composition. It must be added, that some of his pieces, like those of the elegiac and lyric poet Catullus, are rendered offensive by coarse allusions and gross indelicacy. His works have been frequently translated ; but there is a peculiarity in his manner, not happily imitated in any version that has fallen under my notice.

The talents of Ovid, without qualifying him for the most elevated species of poetry, were very respectable. He had a lively imagination, a considerable share of the polite learning of his time, a readiness of expression, and a facility of versification : but he sometimes suffered his wit to out-run his judgement, was too fond of point and antithesis, and could not attain the refined and harmonious elegance of Virgil. His Metamorphoses claim the character of a very ingenious work : yet, notwithstanding the variety of stories which he relates, many readers are at length wearied with the recurrence of transformations. His *Tristia* are melancholy, but seem to be deficient in true pathos. The Art of Love exhibits him in the light of

a gay admirer of the fair, and of one who was capable of giving such advice as would point their attractions and improve their charms.

Tibullus and Propertius are not unworthy of notice. The elegies of the former bard are recommended by unaffected elegance, and by pathetic tenderness; while those of the latter are more labored and stately, and less interesting. Gallus also acquired fame by attempting the same branch of poetry.

The first historians of Rome were not equal, as writers, to the early poets. Fabius Pictor stated facts like a mere annalist; and the elder Cato, while he surpassed that author, did not impart grace or interest to his narratives. Cælius Antipater assumed a higher strain, in recounting the incidents of the war with the Carthaginians. Piso and Fannius wrote jejune annals. Sisenna brought down the history of his country to the time of Sylla; and Valerius of Antium, employing himself in the same task, produced a more voluminous, if not a more valuable work. Sallust at length arose, and illuminated the historic horizon with the rays of genius. Julius Cæsar narrated his own exploits with perspicuity and force, and wrote (says an ancient critic) with the same spirit with which he fought. Varro cultivated history among other pursuits; but we have not the means of forming a proper judgement of his abilities in that branch of literature, as time has deprived the world of all his works, except fragments and very short tracts. In the first public library which was opened at Rome, the only living citizen to whose honor a statue was exhibited, was Varro; and the compliment thus paid to "the most learned of all the Romans" by the orator Polliô, reflected great credit both upon himself and his friend.

Livy was the historic ornament of the Augustan age. He traced the Roman affairs from the foundation of the city to the death of Drusus, in 140 books, of which only 35 now remain. This author proceeds in a regular course of

accurate information, pertinently introducing occasional reflexions; rising to dignified elegance when the subject requires it; sometimes exciting tender sensations; at other times rousing the stronger passions; fixing the reader's attention, and drawing him on, as it were, with irresistible force. The part which we possess may be considered as a valuable treasure, and an admirable monument of genius.

While the Romans rivaled the Greeks in eloquence and polite learning, they were far from being equal to that nation in scientific attainments. In astronomy, they were humble followers of those whom they had conquered by arms; for they could not even reform the calendar without the aid of the Greeks. In the profundities of natural philosophy they were not conversant; nor were they skilled in the higher branches of mathematical knowledge; but they were acquainted with the mechanical powers, and applied this knowledge with success to purposes of varied utility. To the medical science, and the surgical art, they for several ages paid so little attention, that those important pursuits and occupations were almost wholly left to slaves. Some of these, when by skill or by good fortune they had performed remarkable cures, obtained from grateful masters the indulgence of freedom. Either in consequence of an invitation, or in the hope of meeting with great encouragement, Archagathus, a Peloponnesian, made his appearance at Rome; but he excited such terror, by the roughness and supposed inhumanity of his surgical operations, that he soon ceased to be employed. Cato the Censor particularly desired his son not to employ Greek physicians; but their reputation and influence at length so far prevailed, that their modes of practice were chiefly followed<sup>25</sup>.

The architectural art was ably exercised by the Romans, even in the infancy of their state. They were indebted, for their early skill in this art, to the Etrurians;

25 Plin<sup>i</sup> Hist. Nat. lib. xxix. cap. 1.



and the Tuscan order was the first which they adopted. Their original temples were crowned with cupolas; for they appear to have been fond both of circular and elliptic forms. The walls with which Romulus protected their city, were chiefly formed of earth; but the elder Tarquin commenced the erection of a wall of stone, which was completed by Tullius, who added to the work a rampart and fosse. Tarquin the Proud finished the Capitol, of which his father was the founder; and to both princes a very useful work is ascribed,—the formation of *cloacæ* or subterranean channels for the purification of the city<sup>26</sup>. These were so skilfully and substantially constructed, as to excite the astonishment of succeeding ages. In both these works, he enforced, by an arbitrary mandate, the labor of the people, whose operations were directed by Etrurian architects.

The original Capitoline temple was not very large or magnificent; but, when it had been destroyed by fire, Sylla gave greater extent and splendor to the renovated structure, which he embellished with beautiful columns brought from Athens, and with other spoils of Greece. The Pantheon was equally splendid. This building has been attributed to Agrippa; but some antiquaries are of opinion, that he only imparted to it new embellishments, and added an elegant portico. The interior circumference contained seven niches, in which appeared the statues of various Deities: before each of these were two fluted pillars of the finest marble: the inner wall was cased with the same material; and the roof of the portico was covered with gilt bronze. The Corinthian order, used in this structure, was chiefly admired by the Romans: yet they introduced a new order, called the *Composite*, from the combinations which it involved: it was more massive, if not more beautifully ornamental, than the Corinthian.

Roman skill and industry were eminently conspicuous in the aqueducts. For above four centuries, Rome merely enjoyed the produce of the Tiber and of springs : but, as a more copious supply was urgently required, when the city became very large and populous, Appius Claudius devised means for the conveyance of water from the Anio. A course of strong brick-work or stone, arched at the top, covered a canal, which, notwithstanding all inequalities of ground, regularly proceeded to the city. More considerable aqueducts, one of which exhibited the extraordinary appearance of a lower canal passing under another, were formed in the sequel ; and that which Agrippa ordered to be constructed, when he acted as ædile, was not only furnished with every useful appendage, but was profusely decorated with statues and other embellishments. This patriotic minister also promoted the health and gratified the luxury of the citizens, by erecting a multitude of additional baths, some of which were spacious and magnificent.

To the firmness and substantiality of their roads, the Romans particularly attended. More durable high-ways were never formed by any nation. They were frequently paved with flint, and cemented with as much care as the walls of buildings, in which pebbles were interspersed with old fragments and remains, and courses of brick or stone were regularly introduced, with an accompaniment of the best mortar. The Roman bricks were strong and firm, and were sometimes used, like those of Babylon, without being previously matured by fire.

Although Etrurian and Grecian architects were chiefly employed by the Romans, some of the citizens acquired considerable skill in the art of building. Cossutius became so eminent in this respect, that he was even invited to exercise his talents in Greece ; and Vitruvius gave very judicious directions, not only for the erection of temples, basilicæ or halls of justice, theatres, and other public edi-

fices, but also for private houses, which, in the later times of the republic, were built for the rich with elaborate art and profuse expenditure.

Sculpture was introduced at Rome from Etruria, under the government of Romulus ; but, for a long time, only statues of the Deities were formed ; and these were merely of wood or of clay. Representations of warriors and patriots were afterward exhibited, in commemoration of distinguished merit ; but, in the fabrication of these figures, the Romans were awkward and unskilful. The first brazen statue at Rome was fixed in the temple of Ceres, out of the private property of Cassius, who was condemned to death for aiming at arbitrary power. The vanity of this aspiring citizen had prompted him to display his own image in the front of Vesta's fane : but the censors would not suffer it to remain ; and they ordained, that no figures of citizens, however illustrious, should be erected by private gratitude or respect. These exhibitions were at length unrestrained ; and, in the mean time, the art of painting made some progress among the Romans. A citizen of the family of Fabius derived the appellation of *Pictor* from his skill in this pursuit<sup>27</sup> ; and Valerius Messala exposed to public view a delineation of a battle in which he had defeated the Carthaginians : but the name of the artist is not stated. Scipio Asiaticus, with equal ostentation, exhibited in the Capitol a pictorial representation of his victory over Antiochus ; and Lucius Mancinus, by pointing out to the admiring citizens the beauties of a picture, of which his exploits were the prominent features, procured the honor of the consulate<sup>28</sup>.

When the subjugation of the Grecian states had excited a general taste for refined works of art, many of the Romans imitated those productions which they could not ex-

27 About three centuries before our æra.

28 Plin. lib. xxxv. cap. 4.



cel ; and while some relinquished the task in despair, others gradually made such approaches as reflected credit upon their talents.

In this survey of Roman pursuits and occupations, one art remains to be mentioned, which is neither liberal nor absolutely mechanical, but which is considered by statesmen as essential to the preservation of every community—I mean the military art. This part of the prevailing system, however mischievous and fatal in the hands of ambition, is certainly useful in a defensive point of view : yet it would be wholly unnecessary, if mankind would make a proper use of that rational faculty which was given both for particular and general benefit, not for the propagation of discord, the enforcement of sanguinary animosity, or the wanton multiplication of human calamities.

The first king of the Romans being a warrior, and his followers partaking of his spirit, a martial character was impressed upon the nation ; and it was so far from declining in a series of reigns, or during the republican administration, that it subsisted in full vigor when the imperial dynasty commenced.

Romulus, both as a mark of honor, and as a guard to his person, formed a company of three hundred horsemen out of the principal families in his new kingdom ; and these were not only considered as military men, but became the first members of a distinct class in the state, namely, the equestrian or knightly order, which formed a link between the senators and the plebeians.

Each division of the infantry far out-numbered the cavalry. The *velites* were the light troops ; while the *principes* and *triarii* formed the chief strength of the army. The *hastati* were added in the sequel ; and, when the desultory combatants had made a sort of prelude, those spear-men advanced to the attack. The *principes* followed with greater vigor ; and the *triarii*, with still more effec-

tive energy, supported the honor of Rome. The *velites* wore a cap of leather, and were furnished with a sword, a round buckler, and thin javelins. The rest of the infantry had at first a crested helmet of brass, and afterward one of iron; a large and strong shield; a leathern coat of mail, fortified with iron; long hooked javelins, and a sword. The cavalry had for many years no armour for the breast; but it was at length deemed adviseable to give, to that branch of the army, the same defence which the infantry enjoyed<sup>29</sup>.

The life of a Roman legionary was a state of labor and exercise. For this reason, instead of affixing, to a multitude of warriors, a name derived from the practice of bearing *arms*, the citizens gave, to their enlisted countrymen, the appellation of an *exercised* body<sup>30</sup>. For about three centuries and a half, the people sustained the labors of the camp, for the mere honor of the service, without the benefit of pay: but, being disgusted at the frequency of the wars in which they were involved by the senate, they declared their unwillingness to renew their service, unless a regular stipend should be assigned to them. Their request being granted<sup>31</sup>, that qualification in point of property, which had been hitherto required of candidates for warfare, was less strictly enforced, and at length wholly disregarded.

In the formation of a camp, the Romans were methodical and skilful. They preferred a square to every other form: the ground was reduced to a level state by military labor: the stations for each legion, and for the subordinate divisions, were precisely marked out: one part was appropriated to religious ceremonies and worship, another part to meetings and consultations connected with the

29 Kennet's *Romæ Antiquæ Notitia*.

30 *Exercitus*.

31 To each foot-soldier two *oboli* (about 2½d.) were daily given, and a *drachma* (about 7½d.) to every horseman.

war: a strong rampart encompassed the whole space, and a deep fosse was an additional obstacle to hostile intrusion.

If we reflect on the vigor and energy of the legionaries, and the strength of the engines and machines which they used, we may be surprised at their occasional slowness in the reduction of towns. They were not so quick or alert in that branch of military service as it might be supposed that they would have been. They frequently assaulted without effect; they battered; they undermined: yet sieges were sometimes protracted to a very long duration. Even in the field, for a succession of ages, their superiority was not so striking as to quicken, in any remarkable degree, their advance to dominion: but their perseverance ensured their triumph. In my narrative, you have traced their progress; and, in the sequel, you will observe, with equal attention and interest, the effects of their exorbitant extension of power.

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## LETTER V.

*History of the ROMAN EMPIRE, during the Reign of TIBERIUS.*

IF the settlement of the imperial succession had been left to the fair decision of the Roman people, Germanicus would have been the object of general choice. His courage and capacity, his virtues and accomplishments, qualified him to adorn the throne: but, as the late prince had marked out Tiberius for the sovereignty, by that participation of power which he had assigned to him, by a public adoption, and by naming him his principal heir, the unambitious citizen resisted all the exhortations of his military and political friends, and declared that he would by no means oppose the more legitimate

A. D. 14.



pretensions of his uncle. When the troops, on both sides of the Rhine, called for his assumption of the sovereign power, he so peremptorily refused the honor, that he threatened to kill himself, rather than comply with their wish.

Tiberius, without assuming the title of emperor, kept a strong guard both for dignity and safety, and issued various orders, as if the supremacy had belonged to him by indisputable right. His first act was that of a ruffian. By the agency of a centurion, he took away the life of Agrippa, pretending that Augustus had ordered the violent deed, to prevent a dangerous contest for the succession<sup>1</sup>. No one gave credit to the assertion; but fear checked all inquiry.

As the higher classes at Rome were ready to acknowledge the heir of Augustus, the people followed the same course. Habituated to the yoke imposed by the politic and fortunate emperor, they submitted, even after his death, to his dictation. The two consuls, Pompeius and Apuleius, first swore allegiance to Tiberius. Seius Strabo, the prætorian præfect, was the next who took the oath: the senate, and the rest of the citizens, also acknowledged his authority. He convoked that assembly which had been so passive in the late reign, on the mere pretence of adjusting the funeral honors due to his patron. It was voted by acclamation, that the body should be carried to the field of Mars only by senators. When Tiberius and his son had pronounced the eulogium of the defunct prince, the corpse, after various ceremonies and marks of respect, received from the hands of centurions the flames which consumed it. The remains were collected by Livia and the principal knights, and, being deposited in an urn, were preserved in the mausoleum which had been erected by Augustus himself.

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. *Annales*, lib. i. cap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lvi.—Tacit. lib. i. cap. 7, 8.

After the solemnisation of the obsequies, the senate humbly entreated Tiberius to undertake the arduous task of government. The artful dissimulator, with an air of modesty, spoke of his unworthiness and inability ; represented the deified Augustus as alone qualified to sustain, with due wisdom and dignity, the weight of that great political fabric which he had cemented ; and recommended an association of rulers as preferable to monarchic sway. Some of the members reproved his intractability : others implored his assent with tears ; and many prostrated themselves before him, beseeching him, with the most abject supplications, to become their master and their lord. Expostulation, entreaty, and clamor, at length prevailed ; and he ceased to refuse, although he would not openly say that he accepted the offered dignity<sup>3</sup>.

He delayed his assumption of the supremacy, not from a want of ambition, but from a fear of the popularity of Germanicus, whom the legions in general, he doubted not, would prefer to him. If he should testify a disinclination to the sovereignty, his moderation, he presumed, would recommend him to the clemency of the eventual emperor ; whereas, if he should give unequivocal symptoms of a wish for the highest power, his life would be sacrificed to the policy and safety of his competitor. He therefore pretended, even when he seemed to yield to the importunities of the senators, that he would readily relinquish all power, whenever such resignation should be desired either by them or by the people.

During this contest between the dissimulation of Tiberius and the servile meanness of the senate, a mutiny arose in Pannonia. Percennius, who had transferred his service from the theatre to the camp, stimulated the soldiers to demand an increase of pay and a diminution of

<sup>3</sup> Tacit. lib. i. cap. 11—13.—Sueton. Vit. Tiberii, cap. 21.

the term of service ; and the flame of sedition spread among three legions. They did not, however, arrogate the right of nominating an emperor, but left that momentous concern to the civil power. Junius Blæsus, their commander, finding the torrent too strong to be withstood, suffered them to send his son to Rome, as an advocate of their claims. Subordination seemed then to be restored : but, on the return of an unruly detachment from Nauptum, the mutiny revived : and many of the legionaries began to plunder the circumjacent country. Blæsus ordered some of the marauders to be scourged and imprisoned ; but their comrades rescued them from confinement, menaced the general with their vengeance, expelled their chief officers, and murdered a centurion for his severity. Alarmed at this commotion, Tiberius sent his son with select troops to restore tranquillity. Drusus assured the mutineers, that their requests would meet with due attention from the senate : but this intimation was so unsatisfactory, that they continued to complain and to threaten. Lentulus, who was supposed to have advised a rigorous treatment of the delinquents, with difficulty escaped death. An eclipse of the moon contributed to soften the minds of their leaders, who concluded that the Gods were offended at their conduct ; and violent rains and storms, coming before they were expected, concurred to depress the mal-contents. Drusus now permitted them to send a new deputation to his father ; but he did not wait for the effect of the application. He knew that Tiberius would not blame him for any act of treachery or of cruelty ; and, therefore, he sent for Percennius and his chief associate Vibulenus, who, trusting to the faith of the government, readily presented themselves, and were instantly put to death. Other leading mutineers were eagerly sought out, and treated with the same rigor ; and some were given up to punishment by



their fellow-soldiers. The rest of the troops, terrified and confounded, returned to their duty<sup>4</sup>.

The legions near the Rhine, in the mean time, continued to press Germanicus to an acceptance of the imperial dignity. His firmness, however, could not be shaken. To draw off their attention from that subject, he promised to the veterans, in the name of Tiberius, the favor of dismissal, and a duplication of the legacy bequeathed to each legionary by Augustus. To the men who composed two of the legions, money was advanced by the general and his friends, to appease their clamors; and others also enforced the payment. Three legions, stationed at some distance from these, were with little difficulty induced to take the oath of allegiance to Tiberius; whose deputies soon after arrived in the territory of the Ubii, and introduced themselves to Germanicus with secret instructions. These messengers, being suspected of having brought an order for the annulment of the late concessions, were menaced with military vengeance: but they were saved by the influence of Germanicus, and dismissed with a guard of cavalry. He also sent away his wife and his son Caius, that they might be protected by the Treviri from military insult. This distrust of the intentions of the mutinous soldiers, had such an effect upon two of the legions, that they resolved to dissipate his suspicions by a manifestation of their sorrow and penitence. They desired him to punish their guilty leaders; implored his pardon for the deluded multitude; and requested him to employ the reclaimed troops in an immediate expedition against the Germans. A summary trial was instituted, in which the assembled soldiers were the judges; and, if they declared an individual guilty, he instantly suffered death. The two legions that seemed to have been first pacified, still exhibited a refractory spirit.

4 Di. Cass. lib. lvii. cap. 2.—Tacit. lib. i.

Germanicus, incensed at their obstinacy, threatened them with all the severity of vengeance; and, when his lieutenant Cæcina had expostulated with many of their officers, a dreadful scene ensued. The greater part of each legion, professing a willingness to submit, consented to undertake the task of punishing the most active mutineers. Suddenly rushing into the tents, the treacherous legionaries slew their unsuspecting fellow-soldiers, with whom the assassins had passed the morning in apparent friendship. Germanicus, who came up when the slaughter had ceased, shed tears at the sight of so many of his lifeless countrymen: but his grief was quickly allayed by the joy of restored tranquillity<sup>5</sup>.

An attack upon some of the German communities exercised the soldiers, as soon as the commotions were quelled. Fierce ravages were diffused over a great extent of country; and those who had no apprehension of a hostile visit were cruelly massacred. The Bructeri and their neighbours, roused by this merciless irruption, endeavoured to intercept the retreat of the invaders: but, after harassing their flanks and front with some effect, they were repelled with loss.

Tiberius harangued the senate in praise both of his nephew and his son; and he not only confirmed the concessions of the former general, but extended them to the legions in Pannonia. Yet, the more he was indebted to the forbearance of Germanicus for the possession of sovereignty, the less gratitude did he feel. He repined at the popularity of that illustrious citizen, and viewed him with eyes of malignant jealousy and mischievous hatred.

A. D. 15. In the progress of the German war, the Romans invaded the territories of the Catti with their favorite commander, and indulged themselves in

wanton devastation. The Cherusci were on the point of marching to assist the harassed community ; but the activity of Cæcina prevented them from executing their intentions ; and a body of auxiliaries, from the Marsian state, he engaged and routed. Segestes took this opportunity of soliciting the interference of Germanicus ; alleging, that the faction of his son-in-law, thirsting for war, kept him by menaces in a state of alarm. Troops were sent to bring him away in safety ; and a multitude of his relatives and friends, with the wife of Arminius, were led off with the Romanised chieftain. Inveighing against the treachery of Segestes, Arminius roused the Cherusci and some other states to a spirited opposition ; and his uncle Inguiomer, an able warrior, renouncing his attachment to Rome, zealously promoted the confederacy.

Germanicus was not slow or negligent in counter-acting the league. He sent Stertinius against the Bructeri, who were routed by that officer ; and the whole country, between the Ems and the Lippe, was furiously ravaged. In the course of the campaign, he reached the spot where Varus had fallen ; and, with pious care, he assisted the soldiers in collecting and burying the bones of the unfortunate legionaries who had been sacrificed by the rashness of that commander<sup>6</sup>. He at length overtook Arminius ; but a select body, rushing from the woods, so actively co-operated with the rest of that chieftain's army, that the Romans were in danger of a defeat : yet the efforts of Germanicus kept up the courage of his men, who, if they did not conquer, avoided the disgrace of being vanquished. In returning toward the Rhine, Cæcina's division was seriously endangered. He was attacked by Arminius in an extensive and woody morass, in which his men were more entangled and impeded than the Germans, who were less heavily armed, and more alert in their motions. After

<sup>6</sup> Sueton. Vit. Caligulæ, cap. 3.



considerable loss, the legionaries found a firm and open plain, where they began to raise entrenchments. The Germans, not thinking that these hasty works would secure the invaders, assaulted them with great fury ; but, when they were ready to mount the rampart, after filling up the fosse, they were repelled by a vigorous sally, and put to flight with terrific carnage. The troops, without farther danger, reached the Rhine, which they crossed by a bridge that Agrippina<sup>7</sup> had refused to demolish, even when it was reported that the Germans had been completely victorious, and were hastening to the banks of the river. This *trait* of courage, and her friendly reception of the returning soldiers, whom she animated by her exhortations, and relieved by her bounty, increased that jealousy which the merit of her husband had implanted in the breast of Tiberius<sup>8</sup>.

The emperor's attention was now called from Germany to the East. Phraates, the Parthian despot, had fallen a victim to the ingratitude and ambition of Thermusa, first his concubine and afterward his wife ; who wished for the elevation of her illegitimate son to the throne. He deserved his fate, but not from the hands of his son or his wife. The object which prompted to the murder was not attained ; for the nobles would not suffer the base-born pretender to act as their sovereign, but quickly expelled him, and, after a disordered *interregnum*, gave the diadem to Orodes. Execrating the inhumanity of the new king, they murdered him, while he was employed in the chase ; and, applying to Augustus for another prince of the family of Arsaces, they received Vonones (a son of Phraates), who had for some time resided at Rome as an hostage. To this prince, however, they did not permanently submit, as he was too far Romanised to please their haughty spirit. Artabanus the Mede, who was of the

<sup>7</sup> The grand-daughter of Augustus, and wife of Germanicus.

<sup>8</sup> Tacit. lib. i.

same family, was invited to reign in Parthia; and, although he lost one battle, he was afterward so decisively victorious, as to establish himself in the sovereignty for a long course of years. The vanquished prince fled into Armenia, where confusion had prevailed since the death of Ariobarzanes, a Mede, whom Caius, the grandson of Augustus, had placed on the throne in lieu of Tigranes. As Tiberius was unwilling to assist the fugitive in the acquisition of the Armenian royalty, which in policy he ought to have secured from the Parthian grasp, Vonones retired into Syria, while Artabanus subjected Armenia to the sway of his son Orodes<sup>9</sup>.

In one respect, these commotions and hostilities were far from being disagreeable to Tiberius; for they furnished him with a pretence for detaching his popular nephew from the Germanic army, and sending him into a country where he might be more exposed to perfidious machinations. Germanicus was aware of the emperor's jealousy: yet he did not know how he could most effectually remove it from the diseased and depraved mind of such a prince. While he waited for fresh orders from Rome, he continued his career with the legions that respected and admired him. By advancing to the Lippe, he dispersed the besiegers of a fortress; and, as soon as his fleet arrived up the Rhine, he entered the canal<sup>10</sup> which bore the name of his illustrious father, and, having reached the ocean, proceeded along the coast to the mouth of the Ems. Sending a detachment to chastise the Angrivarians for a revolt, he marched to the Weser, with a view of attacking the Cherusci. When he had passed the river, he found that the troops of several confederate states were assembled in a wood, and that they intended to assault his camp in the night. He baffled this attempt by his vigilance; and, calling a council in the morning,

9 Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. xviii. cap. 3.—Tacit. lib. ii. cap. 1—4.

10 Joining the Rhine to the Yssel.

he recommended an immediate conflict. Arminius was equally eager to engage. He posted the Cherusci upon a hill, ordering them to rush down while the Romans were kept in action by the rest of the German army. So judicious were the *manœuvres* of Germanicus, and so strenuous were the exertions of the legionaries, that the allies who were stationed in the woods, those who fought on the plain, and the occupants of the different eminences, were driven from their posts in confusion. Arminius, having stained his face with his own blood, escaped on a fleet courser; but most of the chieftains fell, with so great a number of the common men, that, for the space of many miles, the ground was almost entirely covered with bodies and weapons. The routed host fled toward the Elbe, to seek new habitations; but the erection of a trophy on the spot where the late battle was fought, with an inscription specifying the names of the defeated nations, so galled the fugitives, that they re-traced their steps, and resolved to risk another conflict. They made choice of a post which they thought they could defend, and added works to it's natural strength. After a fierce collision, they were again routed. The victorious general, suffering his humanity to give way to indignation and resentment, rode about the field, urging his soldiers to incessant and merciless slaughter<sup>11</sup>.

A severe and afflictive loss allayed the joy which these victories produced. While some legions were sent by land into winter-quarters, the majority were conveyed by the fleet from the Ems into the ocean. After a short voyage, so violent a storm arose, that many of the vessels foundered, and others were dashed on the shore, with the loss of a considerable part of the army. The fate of these victims would have been more worthy of regret and compassion, if they had not so recently exercised their pitiless rage upon their vanquished adversaries.



Germanicus was, at first, so confounded at this calamity, that his friends could not without difficulty dissuade him from throwing himself into that sea which had proved so fatal. When he had recovered his equanimity, he undertook another expedition, to convince the Germans that he had still the means of powerful hostility. As they did not dare to meet him, he widely diffused his ravages, before he rested for the winter.

He would gladly have renewed his operations in the following spring, if he had not been urgently recalled by Tiberius, who declared himself satisfied with the success of the last campaign, and added, that the Germans might now be left to the operation of internal discord and of Roman intrigue. When the general requested a prolongation of his command for another year, the emperor still pressed him to return, hinting that, if the conduct of the Germans should require a renovation of hostilities, an opportunity of triumphing over them ought to be left to Drusus. Unwilling to disobey, Germanicus prepared for his return to Rome, where the honors of a triumph awaited him.

Before his return, a conspiracy against his uncle was detected, or perhaps only pretended to have been discovered. Libo was accused of entertaining views of sovereignty; and, although no guilt of that kind could be proved, he put an end to his own life, from a despair of allaying the jealousy of the despot. A thanks-giving was decreed, as if the emperor's authority had really been endangered; and the anniversary of the death of the supposed traitor was ordered to be kept as a festival. As this young patrician had consulted the soothsayers, all persons of that description were banished from Italy, and one was precipitated from the Tarpeian rock<sup>12</sup>.

A conspiracy of a less problematical nature was afterward discovered. A slave of the younger Agrippa, re-

<sup>12</sup> Tacit. lib. ii.—Dio says, that the provincial astrologers and pretenders to divination were put to death, and that those of Rome were merely banished.

sembling his master in person, pretended that he had escaped from the tyrant's cruelty, and drew a number of persons, both in Italy and Gaul, to his interest. Tiberius did not send troops against him, but employed emissaries to entrap him, by professing a desire of promoting his views. Thus deluded, he was seised without difficulty. Being asked by the emperor, how he became Agrippa, he answered sarcastically, "As easily as you became Cæsar." He was privately punished with death; refusing, to the last moment of his life, to make any confession that could criminate others. Content with the sacrifice of this bold offender to the security of the government, Tiberius prudently abstained from all farther inquiry into the particulars and the extent of the plot<sup>13</sup>.

While the emperor thus baffled internal machinations, he externally augmented the dominion of Rome.

A. D. 17.

Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, had formerly offended him, by not treating him with obsequious respect when he resided at Rhodes, and by manifesting a superior regard for Caius, the grandson of Augustus. The unforgiving tyrant, desiring his mother to inform the Asiatic prince, that all grounds of offence might be removed, if he would appear at Rome as a respectful solicitor of imperial favor, drew the deluded or intimidated victim to his court. Archelaus did not long survive the journey. He was not in good health on his arrival; and grief and terror seem to have hastened his death<sup>14</sup>. Orders were imme-

<sup>13</sup> Tacit. lib. ii.—Di. Cass. lib. lvii.

<sup>14</sup> Sueton. Vit. Tiberii, cap. 37.—Tacit. lib. ii.—Dio states that he was accused, before the senate, of a wish to shake off his vassalage; but he adds, that Tiberius, after menacing him with death, graciously suffered him to escape condemnation. It appears, that the emperor was disgusted at the ingratitude of a prince for whom he had pleaded at the court of Augustus, when some of his subjects adduced a charge against him; but that was not a sufficient reason for driving the aged king to despair. Archelaus knew that the mere formality of acquittal did not secure him from the vengeance of a gloomy and suspicious tyrant; and he therefore continued to feel all the horrors of anxiety. Tibe-

diately given for reducing Cappadocia into the form of a province.

The king of Comagene and a Cilician prince dying about the same time, disputes arose between the partisans of Rome and those who wished for the accession of a native prince; and, as the people in general, in Syria and Judæa, called for a diminution of imposts, these considerations concurred, with the disorders of Armenia, to suggest the expediency of sending an able governor into the East. Tiberius harangued the senate on this subject, and proposed that the talents and wisdom of Germanicus should be employed in allaying the commotions of Asia. Silanus, a friend of that commander, was removed from the government of Syria; and Cnæus Piso, who was ready to execute the secret will of the tyrant, was invested with the chief authority in that province.

A regard for Drusus, and a zeal for Germanicus, divided the imperial court. The sycophants of Tiberius favored his son; while the more respectable part of the patricians, and the majority of the nation, admired and esteemed his nephew. Some degree of animosity prevailed between the parties; but the two leaders lived in concord. Drusus was now sent into Germany, that he might be weaned from the luxury of Rome, and accustomed to the fatigues and hardships of a camp. While he remained with the army, the dissensions of the Germans were productive of intestine war. The Cherusci and other communities, jealous of the martial glory of the Suevi, took arms against Maroboduus, a bold adventurer, who had transplanted the Marcomanni into the territories bordering upon the Hercynian forest, and, by his courage and ability, had extended his authority over various states.

rius had not, indeed, shown himself so early in his true colors; for he was an artful dissembler; but *traits* of injustice and cruelty had been observed, which furnished grounds of strong alarm.



Two of these states<sup>15</sup> revolted to Arminius; from whom, on the other hand, Inguomer and his dependents transferred their services to Maroboduus. A regular conflict occurred, in which both parties showed that they had profited by the observance of Roman discipline. The event was long doubtful; and, on each side, the left wing prevailed; but, as a movement of retreat commenced on the part of Maroboduus, he tacitly acknowledged the superiority of Arminius. When he applied to the Romans for succour, the answer imported, that he could not reasonably expect aid from those whom he had not assisted against the same enemy. Drusus, however, so far interposed his influence, as to mediate an accommodation between the rival leaders<sup>16</sup>.

A war in Africa, at the same time, excited the attention of the Romans. A Numidian, named Tacfarinas, who had acquired experience under the standard of Rome, collected a band of robbers, and at length augmented his licentious company into a numerous military body. The proconsul Camillus could only bring into the field one legion and some auxiliary cohorts; but, with this comparatively small force, he engaged and routed Tacfarinas, who was thus over-awed into temporary forbearance.

Tiberius, in the mean while, remained at Rome, attending with diligence to the affairs of government, and even to the concerns of morality. In his administration, he professed a great regard for the authority of the senate, and expressed a wish that the members would speak and vote without fear or partiality. When some points were determined against his known sentiments, he did not give the smallest indications of displeasure<sup>17</sup>. In one question, at the division of the house, no one followed him when he voted, with the minority. He suffered the consuls, in

<sup>15</sup> The Semnones and Longobardi, the former of whom considered themselves as the most ancient and noble of the Suevi.

<sup>16</sup> Tacit. lib. ii.

<sup>17</sup> Sueton. cap. 31.

many instances, to exercise their former authority; and did not, in general, influence the decisions of the prætors or other magistrates. He procured the expulsion, from the senatorial assembly, of such men as disgraced it by great immorality, or by that poverty which arose from wanton extravagance. To the moral conduct of private individuals, as well as of public men, he paid particular attention; and he sharply animadverted upon gross deviations from propriety and rectitude. He checked the increasing spirit of dissipation and fondness for amusement, restrained the luxury of entertainments, and circumscribed the expence of sports and games. As an example to others, he exhibited public specimens of frugality and parsimony; and, at the same time, he was liberal in relieving indigent senators. He obtained the praise of disinterestedness, by refusing to receive property, bequeathed to him by persons of whom he had no knowledge, and who were at variance with their relatives; and his munificence was applauded, when he contributed a large sum of money for the purpose of re-building twelve cities in Asia Minor, which had been overthrown by an earthquake, beside remitting, for a time, all financial demands upon the inhabitants<sup>18</sup>.

Having procured his own election to the consulate, he admitted Germanicus to the same honor. This commander, being desired to commence his eastern expedition, traversed Greece, where he was  
A. D. 18.  
received with that respect which was due to his character; sailed to the isle of Lesbos (where Agrippina, his amiable wife, gratified him with an increase of family); and, proceeding to Rhodes, was overtaken by Piso, who had been sent out as his persecutor. He might have suffered his adversary to perish in a storm; but he

18 Tacit, lib. ii.—Di. Cass. lib. lvii.

sent some galleys to his relief, without softening in the smallest degree the malice with which Piso pursued him.

When Piso had entered upon his Syrian government, he tried every art that could render him a favorite of the army ; and, while he endeavoured to propagate a very unfavorable opinion of Germanicus, his wife Plancina was equally severe in her strictures upon the character and conduct of Agrippina. Despising the calumnies with which he was assailed, the general directed his attention to the settlement of the affairs of Armenia. No king then ruled over the country ; for Vonones the Parthian<sup>19</sup> had been deprived of that temporary power which the people had allowed him to exercise. As the nation seemed inclined to make choice of Zeno, son of the Pontic king Polemon, Germanicus put an end to the contest for royalty, by throwing the Roman influence into the scale, and publicly placing a diadem upon the head of that prince. He then turned his thoughts to Cappadocia ; and, transferring the government of the province to Veranius, ordered a diminution of the revenue which had been usually exacted from the inhabitants. Comagene was also subjected to the sway of a Roman prætor. These and other provincial arrangements were promotive of tranquillity ; and the wisdom and prudence of Germanicus were acknowledged by all, except Piso and his partisans<sup>20</sup>.

Although Egypt was not in a perturbed state, Germanicus visited the province, on pretence of administrative reform, while his real motive for the journey was an investigation of the antiquities of the country. After the enactment of some popular regulations at Alexandria, he sailed up the Canopic branch of the Nile, viewed the pyramids, surveyed the architectural wonders of

19 This prince, at the request of the Parthian king Artabanus, was confined in Cilicia by Germanicus ; and, attempting to escape into Armenia, he was stabbed by a Roman officer.

20 Tacit. lib. ii.



Thebes, and slowly proceeded to the extremity of Upper Egypt. This extra-official expedition was sharply blamed by the emperor, who alleged the authority of Augustus, as condemnatory of the unlicensed journey of any Roman into so important a province, which, in the hands of an aspiring or turbulent man, might be maintained with a small force against a great army. This ground of censure was maliciously aggravated by Piso, who anxiously waited for the return of Germanicus to Asia, that he might have an opportunity of crushing his power.

In the mean time, the emperor's son contributed, by art and intrigue, to the ruin of the power of Maroboduus. He instigated Catualda, a noble youth, to attack that chieftain; who, being deserted by his troops, requested and obtained an asylum in Italy<sup>21</sup>. Catualda also became an emigrant; for he was checked in his career by Vibilius, and glad to receive protection in Gaul.

In Thrace, the Roman influence was exercised with considerable effect. Rhescuporis<sup>22</sup>, who reigned over a part of that country with the permission of Augustus, encroached on the territories of Cotys, destroyed some of the fortresses of that prince, and at length, in defiance of the conciliatory exhortations of Tiberius, deprived him both of his power and his liberty. The emperor, instead of admitting the excuses of the tyrannical aggressor, ordered him to deliver up Cotys to the proprætor of Mæsia, and defend himself at Rome before the senate. The deposed prince felt the effects of an order which was intended for his protection. Rhescuporis instantly put him to death, and pretended that he had destroyed himself. Being inveigled into the Roman camp by artful persuasions and plausible promises, the assassin was escorted to Rome, condemned upon the testimony of the wife of Cotys, and, after

<sup>21</sup> Tacit. lib. ii.—Paterc. lib. ii.

<sup>22</sup> Called *Thrasypolis* by Suetonius, and *Ruscyporis* by Dio.

a short confinement, put to death, on pretence of an attempt to escape. His innocent son Rhoëmetalces was permitted to succeed him; and the territories of Cotys were subjected to the administration of a Roman citizen, on behalf of that prince's children<sup>23</sup>.

When Germanicus returned into Asia, he found that his military and civil regulations in Syria had been annulled or altered by Piso. He sharply reproved the governor, by whom he was treated in return with much greater acrimony. The general being indisposed, Piso, who had declared in disgust that he would quit the province, remained to see how the disorder would terminate. The apparent recovery of Germanicus having filled Antioch with such joy, that the people publicly thanked the Gods for their regard to so valuable a life, offered sacrifices upon the occasion, and fondly indulged in festive mirth, Piso, enraged at their affection for his adversary, commanded his lictors to obstruct the arrangements and disturb the ceremonies. The disorder soon returned, and proved fatal. It was supposed by the public, and believed by Germanicus himself, that he had been poisoned by the contrivance of Piso and Plancina<sup>24</sup>. As he knew the malignity of the governor, it is surprising that he should rather leave to his friends the melancholy task of avenging his death, than take precautions for securing his life. This was a stretch of magnanimity, inconsistent with the ordinary feelings of nature.

The character of Germanicus comprehended great and varied excellencies. Talents, judgement, wisdom, learning, and eloquence; courage, firmness, and fortitude; unaffected modesty, and dignified politeness; liberality, honor, and integrity; concurred to render him one of the most accomplished men of the age in which he lived, if

<sup>23</sup> Tacit. lib. ii.

<sup>24</sup> Tacit. lib. ii.—Sueton. Vit. Caligulæ, cap. 1, 2.—Joseph. Antiq. x viii. 3.  
—Di. Cass.

not the greatest man of his time. While he was admired for his splendid qualifications, he was beloved for his mild virtues and conciliatory manners. Yet, with all his humanity and moderation, he had a tincture of Roman cruelty, which, though not deemed disgraceful by his countrymen, you, my son, will not consider as an ornament of his character.

So popular was this celebrated citizen, that, when he went out or returned, he was usually attended by a great throng, and was sometimes in danger of being overwhelmed by the pressure; and once, on his return from Germany after the suppression of a mutiny, not only all the prætorian cohorts marched out of Rome to meet him, but the inhabitants of all ranks, of both sexes, and of almost every age, poured forth to welcome and applaud him. When the intelligence of his indisposition was succeeded by a report of his convalescence, the people rushed out at night with lights and victims, to testify their joy in the Capitol, and were ready to force the doors of the temple, that not a moment of delay might arise. The emperor, roused from his sleep, heard with disgust such exclamations as these: "Rome is safe—our country is safe—Germanicus is restored to health." The account of his death, as might be expected, produced general regret and the most unfeigned grief, which the edicts of the tyrant could not repress or restrain<sup>25</sup>. The return of Agrippina to Italy, with an urn which contained the ashes of her beloved lord, renewed the popular affliction. The new consuls, the senate, and a great proportion of the citizens of Rome, met the sorrowful widow, who was attended by a nu-  
A. D. 20.  
 merous body of lamenting provincials; and the tomb of Augustus received the remains of the grandson of Octavia. It was remarked, that the same honors were not paid by the reigning prince to the memory of his nephew,



which were shown by the late emperor to the reliques of Drusus, although the merits of the son were more than equal to those of the father. Tiberius, indeed, was so far from repining at the immature death of Germanicus, that all his dissimulation could not conceal his joy, of which also the unfeeling Livia evidently partook <sup>26</sup>.

Piso, who had either voluntarily left Syria, or had been ordered by Germanicus to retire from the province, exulted in the success of his murderous machinations. He was advised by his son to hasten to Rome, without being intimidated by the idle rumors of that guilt which could not be proved : but other friends urged him to re-appear in Syria, and resume the government. Sentius, who had entered upon the administration with the consent of the chief officers civil and military, cautioned Piso against all attempts to seduce the soldiery or throw the province into confusion, and made preparations for vigorous defence. With a motley groupe of adventurers, Piso took possession of a fortress in Cilicia ; but he could not long maintain his post against the attacks of Sentius, who sent him in safe custody to Rome. As soon as he arrived, a criminal charge was adduced against him before the consuls : a subsequent reference was made to the emperor, by whom the cause was submitted to the cognisance of the senate. The conscript fathers were sufficiently inclined to condemn the offender, whom the populace would have torn in pieces, if he had not been well guarded. He did not wait for a sentence which he thought would be unfavorable ; but took the first opportunity of destroying himself. He was condemned after his death, and his son was banished ; while his wife escaped punishment by the avowed patronage of Livia <sup>27</sup>.

26 Tacit. lib. ii. et iii.—Di. Cass. lib. lvii.

27 Tacit. lib. iii.

## LETTER VI.

*The ROMAN History, continued to the Decease of TIBERIUS.*

THAT spirit of nefarious tyranny which Tiberius had in some measure concealed, broke out, after A. D. 20. the death of his nephew, in every form of oppression and cruelty<sup>1</sup>. He probably apprehended, that a course of misgovernment, while Germanicus lived, might produce a revolt in favor of that popular citizen, whose reluctance might give way to the general wish of the nation; and the removal of this danger prompted him to indulge the malignity of his natural disposition. Another death, which soon followed the untimely fate of Germanicus, also gave him great pleasure. Arminius, after the retreat of Maroboduus into Italy, entertained those views of domination which did not suit the free spirit of his countrymen; and, being involved by his ambition in the perils of intestine war, he fell a victim to the resentment which he had aroused. He had only completed thirty-seven years from his birth. If his life had been considerably prolonged, he might, by his courage and talents, have extinguished the Roman sway in Germany.

Drusus was still intrusted with the task of watching the movements of the Germans, and of repressing occasional insurrections. He was now re-appointed to the consulate, in conjunction with his father, who soon after re- A. D. 21. tired into Campania, intending gradually to withdraw himself from Rome, and tyrannise in the obscurity of retirement.

During this consulate, an insurrection in Gaul alarmed the government. Financial burthens, the extortions of usurers, and a variety of other oppressions, exhausted the

<sup>1</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lvii. cap. 8, 18.—Sueton. Vit. Calig. cap. 6.

patience of the people, who loudly demanded relief. Among the Treviri and the Ædui, Julius Florus and Sacrovir were particularly active in exciting a revolt. The opportunity which was now offered, they said, ought not to be neglected. There was no distinguished general who could act against the insurgents with effect: the emperor was inattentive to foreign affairs; the troops were disorganised, and the Roman citizens were unwarlike. These considerations roused a considerable number of the provincials to action. Florus posted himself in the forest of Ardenne: but, when his followers were dispersed by the activity of the legionaries, he fell upon his own sword. Sacrovir took possession of the Æduan capital<sup>2</sup>, with a multitude of malcontents and adventurers, and breathed defiance against the adherents of a tyrannical prince. Only a fifth part of the number being properly armed, the rest of his force had the appearance of hunters rather than of warriors; but he hoped to compensate the deficiency of regular arms by the intrepid zeal of liberty<sup>3</sup>.

When the Gauls were brought to action, they did not display that spirit which the occasion required. They ought either to have remained in submission, or (when they resolved to rise) to have acted with the vigor of men who wished to shake off an oppressive yoke. By Silius and two legions, they were quickly routed; and their leader killed himself, while his principal friends slew each other. Thus were quelled the Gallic commotions, which Tiberius did not think worthy of his personal interference, or of the efforts of his son. He pretended that he would go into Gaul to restore the country to perfect order and tranquillity: but this was mere affectation. A courtly senator proposed, that, on his return from his provincial excursion, he should enter Rome with the honors of an ovation, as his advice and suggestions had chiefly contributed to the

<sup>2</sup> Augustodunum, now Autun.

<sup>3</sup> Tacit. Annal. lib. iii.



suppression of the revolt. He rejected the offer, without being offended at the grossness of the flattery.

When the empire was free from war and commotion, disputes arose on the expediency of repress-  
A. D. 22.  
 ing the enormous luxury of the age. The ædiles proposed a strict enforcement of the sumptuary laws, or the application of more efficacious remedies to the growing evil. Tiberius, to whom the senate referred the case, declared it as his opinion, that it would be impolitic to expose the insufficiency of the law by attempting to extinguish those excesses which could not be effectually prevented; and all great deviations from temperance and frugality were left, as before, to the inquisition and animadversion of the ordinary magistrates.

An abuse of a different kind more urgently required correction. The privilege of sanctuary, by protecting criminals from justice, tended to encourage villany and wickedness. The superstitious Greeks were apprehensive of losing the favor of their Gods, if the temples should be deprived of the right of asylum: but Tiberius and the senate remonstrated against this absurdity of argument, and resolved, if not wholly to suppress, at least to modify the privilege; and a decree was promulgated for that purpose<sup>4</sup>.

Various impeachments also occupied the attention of the senate. The proconsul Silanus was accused of cruelty and extortion; and, being brow-beaten by Tiberius, and not suffered to defend himself with freedom, he was banished to the isle of Cithæra. Cordus, another provincial governor, was also punished with exile. Against Ennius, a knight, a charge of treason was adduced, for having applied a representation of the emperor to the ordinary use of silver: but Tiberius would not permit so frivolous a

<sup>4</sup> Tacit. lib. iii.—This author speaks only of a modification of the right of asylum in Greece; but Suetonius says, that Tiberius abolished the privilege in all parts of the Roman empire: *abolerit jus moremque asyloꝝ, quæ usquam erant.*

charge to be entertained, although one of the courtly senators declared, that so great an offence ought not to pass unpunished.

If the servility of the senate could give strength to the government, that advantage was enjoyed in a high degree by Tiberius. Sometimes he was so ashamed of the abject humility of the assembly, that he exclaimed, on retiring from the hall, "How prone are these men to slavery!" It was not, therefore, to be supposed, that, when he desired the senate to honor and aggrandise his son, by giving him the tribunitian power, in the height to which Augustus had raised it, the least hint of repugnance or objection would be offered.

While Tiberius promoted Drusus to an apparent association of power, he did not pay great regard to his advice. His most favored counsellor was Ælius Sejanus, who, by his plausible and insinuating manners, and by an appearance of talent, had recommended himself at court, and obtained the command of the prætorian troops. That he might bring these cohorts more immediately under his eye, the præfect had drawn them from divided stations into one camp; and his arts and address had established his influence over the whole body. Considering Drusus as

A. D. 23. his rival, he resolved to take every opportunity of undermining the power of the new tribune; who, on the other hand, became a warm opponent of the aspiring minister. In the heat of dispute, Drusus gave the præfect a blow; an offence which was not forgotten or pardoned; but, if no such affront had intervened, the mischievous ambition of Sejanus would still have endangered the life of his master's son. For the promotion of his nefarious purpose, he courted the regard of Livilla, the wife of Drusus; and, having seduced her into an adulterous commerce (a task not very difficult in that licentious age), he persuaded her, by promising marriage, and by holding out a prospect of high power, to be his accom-

plice in the murder of her husband. Drusus was aware of the malice of the præfect: yet, when his own wife was his enemy, he could not easily guard himself against the danger of being poisoned. That this was his fate, was not publicly known at the time; but it was generally suspected, and was afterward fully demonstrated<sup>5</sup>.

There is no reason to suspect Tiberius of having the least concern in the death of his son. He did not, indeed, manifest any extraordinary warmth of paternal affection; nor did he suffer the loss to interrupt, except for a very short time, his attention to public business: but he had no motive for the destruction of a prince whom he intended for his successor; and, when he had discovered the cause of his son's unexpected dissolution, he wreaked just vengeance upon the authors and promoters of the crime. He was guilty of horrible enormities; but he may fairly be acquitted of this foul imputation.

The death of Drusus was not deeply lamented by the public, as he was of a ferocious and cruel disposition, and did not promise to be an able or upright sovereign. The friends of Germanicus, in particular, were rather pleased than grieved at the catastrophe, as it opened the way to the elevation of the offspring of that admired citizen. Tiberius,—while he apologised to the weeping senators for not being so immersed in grief as they appeared to be at the loss of his son, and alleged that he thought it his duty to attend with zeal and vigilance to public affairs—recommended two sons<sup>6</sup> of Germanicus to the notice and protection of the assembly, as individuals in whose welfare the state had a serious interest<sup>7</sup>.

Sejanus, having been thus successful in his clandestine attack upon Drusus, meditated treacherous hostilities against the sons of Germanicus, one of whom seemed to be now destined to succeed Tiberius. To promote his si-

<sup>5</sup> Tacit. lib. iv.—Sueton. Vit. Tiberii, cap. 62.

<sup>6</sup> Nero and Drusus.

<sup>7</sup> Tacit. lib. iv.



nister views, he took every opportunity of aspersing the character of their respectable mother, whom also, by his emissaries, he stimulated to aim at the acquisition of political power, knowing that she would thus aggravate the emperor's jealousy into rancorous hatred. When she was complaining of a particular grievance in terms which the despot deemed too free, he took her hand, and said (quoting a Greek verse), "If you are not allowed to govern, do you think yourself injured?"—he then indignantly turned from her<sup>8</sup>. She was aware of her insecurity, and yet could not refrain from occasional freedom of remark, at which no good prince would have been offended, but which a haughty tyrant would resent.

As Tiberius had declared himself the friend of his nephew's sons, the priests, when they commenced  
A. D. 24. a new year with thanks-givings for the preservation of the emperor's valuable life, and prayers for its prolongation, recommended Nero and Drusus to the same Gods who protected the reigning prince,—an association which displeased the tyrant whom they intended to flatter. He instantly sent for the heads of the sacerdotal order, and sternly asked them, whether they had been influenced to this display of zeal by the solicitations or threats of Agrippina. When they disclaimed all such instigation, he dismissed them with a reprimand; and, adverting to the affair in a senatorial meeting, he desired that no one would attempt, by premature honors, to inflame the pride and presumption of his young relatives. Sejanus assured him that the city was divided into parties, and that Agrippina had formed a faction, which might become dangerous, if not opportunely checked. He immediately accused her friend Silius, an able commander, of the violation of a law against *treason*,—a term which Tiberius arbitrarily applied, to any speech or act that displeased

him. Finding that his malignant adversaries were determined upon his ruin, Silius destroyed himself. As he was supposed to have been guilty of extortion, his property was confiscated. This (says Tacitus) was the first instance of the rapacity of Tiberius. Indeed, he raged against human life long before he invaded property.

An insurrection of slaves alarmed the emperor, while he was indulging his malignity in accusations. In Calabria, a mal-content soldier endeavoured to rouse the servile multitude to arms, by holding out the inviting prospect of liberty. He assembled a small force : but a provincial quæstor soon dispersed it ; and an officer sent by Tiberius with a strong *corps* seised the insurgent leader and his chief accomplices.

A renewal of the war in the north of Africa, by Tacfarinas, excited little emotion at Rome, notwithstanding the courage and vigor of the barbarian commander. After the defeat which he sustained from Camillus, he had remained quiet for a year ; and then, emerging from his retreat, he routed a Roman detachment. He was chastised by Apronius for this insult, but not reduced to submission. He still harassed the partisans and subjects of Rome, and, having recruited his army from various parts of Africa, demanded from Tiberius, as a condition of peace, a sufficient portion of land for the permanent support of himself and his followers. The emperor, reprobating the arrogance of one whom he called a deserter and a robber, desired Blæsus to pacify the men, and apprehend their leader. Many were induced to submit ; but Tacfarinas eluded all the efforts of the general, who was gratified, however, with the applause of his sovereign, and the honor of a laureated statue, rather because he was the uncle of Sejanus, than for the importance of his military operations. Dolabella, even with a diminished force, was more successful than his predecessor. He added to the legionaries a resolute body of Mauritanians, and, surprising the

enemy in a woody district, made great havock ; but he was not content with the prodigal slaughter of the multitude, while the chieftain survived. After a diligent search, he was found with a select party ; and, as an escape was impracticable, he rushed upon the weapons of his pursuers. Although Dolabella thus put an end to the war, the emperor refused to grant him those triumphal honors to which he was entitled. He had given offence at court by out-shining the friend of the minister<sup>9</sup>.

A. D. 25. The influence of Sejanus increased, when it

ought to have been extinguished. The advice which he gave to his patron was that of an artful politician, whose ambition was too strong for his sense of justice and virtue. With a view of extending and establishing the power which he had acquired, he persuaded Tiberius to retire from the bustle of Rome, and pass his declining years in rural repose. The emperor, weary of the flatteries of servile senators, and still more disgusted at the severe truths which were sometimes poured into his ears by the populace of the city,—thinking that distance and seclusion would augment respect,—and wishing also to pursue, unobserved, a course of lascivious and vicious indulgences,—had frequently revolved in his mind the expediency of retreat ; and, when his determination was matured, he made choice of Capreæ for his abode, because it was an island fortified by lofty rocks, and accessible only in one part of the coast. When he left Rome, he ordered that

A. D. 26. no one should disturb him by importunities, or even

approach him on pretence of salutation. Stopping in a cavernous recess near Amyclæ, he narrowly escaped a sudden and violent death,—a contingency which would have filled Rome with joy. A part of the rock fell, and crushed some of his companions ; but he, with the aid of Sejanus, emerged without injury.



Before his departure from Rome, a war, which had arisen in Thrace, was terminated by the valor and ability of Poppæus Sabinus. The chief cause of discontent was the arbitrary practice of military conscription. The Thracians could not, without complaining, see their bravest youth carried off, to fight the battles of the Romans ; and, as no positive promises of redress were given, some of their communities had recourse to arms. Assisted by Rhœmetalces, the vassal king, Sabinus first harassed the insurgents in the field, and afterward blockaded them in a hilly spot, where they labored under a scarcity of water. They in vain assaulted the works of circumvallation, and at length submitted in despair <sup>10</sup>.

By relinquishing or modifying the unjust practice of compelling foreigners to arm in the imperial cause, the Romans might have avoided this war : but they were ever unwilling to listen to such complaints. They were not so harassed by the Thracian warriors, as to suffer any great loss in this campaign. A far greater loss was sustained in the following year at Fidenæ, where an ill-constructed amphitheatre gave way, while gladiators were amusing the giddy throng with their cruel sports. Above 20,000 persons are said to have perished on this occasion, either within or near the building <sup>11</sup>. The emperor's presence on the continent being earnestly desired, while the impression of this dreadful calamity was recent, he left his retreat, comforted the surviving relatives, and relieved those who were only maimed by the accident. The architect was banished ; and it was ordained by the senate, that every future building of that kind should be carefully surveyed and examined in it's commencement and progress. Tiberius then returned to Capreæ, and

A. D. 27.

<sup>10</sup> Tacit. lib. iv.

<sup>11</sup> Sueton. cap. 40.—Orosii Hist.—Tacitus, with apparent exaggeration, says, that 50,000 individuals were killed, maimed, or bruised by the accident.

gave a loose to debauchery and vice, while Sejanus exercised the supreme power.

The ambitious and malignant minister prosecuted his schemes for the ruin of the family of Germanicus. He employed spies, in particular, to watch Agrippina and her eldest son, and to hurry them into such steps as might argue a distrust of the emperor, and a wish to seek military or popular protection against his imputed views; and, when they refused to listen to this insidious advice, they were accused of meditating such a course. In a letter which Tiberius addressed to the senate, on the prosecution of a friend of Germanicus, he hinted at the

A. D. 28.

machinations of his enemies, without naming any one; but it was readily conjectured, that the widow and her son were the objects of his pretended alarm. He was requested to disclose the grounds of his apprehensions, that the senate might endeavour to remove them: but he preferred dissimulation to manly candor. Many of the members, at the same time, expressed a wish for the high gratification of his dignified and illustrious presence. He so far complied, as to show himself with Sejanus on the coast of Campania, where persons of all ranks saluted him and his friend with servile humility.

It was difficult for the arrogance and presumption of Sejanus to admit any increase: but the death of Livia seemed to add to his power. Her influence over

A. D. 29.

her son, although it had considerably declined after his elevation to the sovereignty, was still sufficient to operate as an occasional check both upon the prince and his minister. Tiberius knew (but he was ashamed to acknowledge) that he owed his supremacy to the sway which she had exercised over the mind of Augustus; and, even when he neglected her, he did not violently oppose her declared wishes and inclinations. The senate not only ordered the women to mourn her decease for a year, but

decreed the erection of an arch to her memory, because she had saved some of the members from the vengeance of tyranny, and had educated the sons and portioned the daughters of many <sup>12</sup>. Tiberius allowed her a public funeral, without praising her in a formal oration <sup>13</sup>, or suffering the intended arch to be erected.

The obsequies of Livia had scarcely been performed, when an imperial communication, which she was supposed to have with-holden, was read to the senate. It contained charges against Agrippina and Nero, not involving sedition or treason, but imputing incontinence and unnatural desires to the youth, and arrogance and contumacy to the mother. The assembly received the accusation with fear and silence. At length some of the members proposed rigorous measures; but the moderation of Junius Rusticus recommended a delay of decision. The people testified their indignation at the charges; and some exclaimed, that the letter was a forgery. Tiberius, repeating the accusations, desired that proper notice might be taken of them, and reprimanded the people by an acrimonious proclamation. The senate no longer disputed the will of the prince, but promised to proceed against his adversaries in any mode which his just indignation might point out. Agrippina was soon after banished to Pandataria; while Nero and Drusus were stigmatised as enemies of the state, and confined without a prospect of rescue <sup>14</sup>.

Having received very unusual honors from the senate, and being still indulged with the implicit confidence of Tiberius, Sejanus rioted in the exercise of unbounded power. The law against treason was interpreted, by this infamous minister and his unfeeling patron, in a way so comprehensively cruel, as to affix guilt not only to

A. D. 30.

<sup>12</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lvi. cap. 2.

<sup>13</sup> That complimentary office was performed for her by her great-grandson Caius, surnamed *Caligula* from the military shoe or sandal which he wore.

<sup>14</sup> Tacit. lib. v.



sedition or irregular acts, but even to a trifling freedom of expression. The exercise of such horrible tyranny, under the forms of law, rendered the government unworthy of support : yet no real sedition occurred ; no conspiracies were formed. The most disgraceful servility prevailed, while two monsters sacrificed men of all ranks (but chiefly of the higher orders) to their jealousy or caprice. Sejanus did not foresee that his own turn would follow. He was so bold in his operations, and so eager for the extension of his influence, either by persuasion or by terror, that he was generally suspected of aiming at the imperial succession. He removed one of his rivals in the person of Nero, who, to avoid the ignominious death with which he was threatened in the name of the senate, destroyed himself by abstaining from food <sup>15</sup>. But Drusus and Caligula remained ; and the latter was more particularly an object of the minister's jealousy, after he had been honored with the sacerdotal dignity by Tiberius, who, at the time of this appointment, publicly made such remarks, as seemed to intimate that he destined this youth for the sovereignty, however unworthy he knew him to be of that splendid elevation.

The tyrant at length found that his minister was too powerful ; he even began to suspect that his own life was exposed to danger from the inordinate ambition of his supposed friend. He now received intelligence, from his sister-in-law, Antonia, of the arts, crimes, and treasonable views of Sejanus, whom he therefore devoted to death : but, being aware of the great influence of his intended victim, he dissembled all knowledge of his misconduct and treachery, and resolved to proceed with the most politic caution, until he had his enemy securely within his grasp. The better to delude him, when the emperor named himself to the consulate, he honored the minister with a simi-

15 Sueton. cap. 54.

lar appointment; and the senate, treating both consuls with equal reverence, decreed that they should enjoy the same dignity for five years. Statues A. D. 31. and images were multiplied in honor of the two rulers of the empire: sacrifices were frequently offered to each; and disrespect to either was considered as impiety<sup>16</sup>.

To keep Sejanus in anxious suspense, Tiberius sometimes publicly praised him, and at other times spoke contemptuously or unfavorably of him; honored and exalted some of the minister's friends, and stigmatised or humbled others; intimated to the senate, at one time, that he was so indisposed, as not to expect that he should long live; and, on another day, assured all who were interested in his welfare, that he was in a state of perfect health, and would soon return to the imperial metropolis. Being thus amused, Sejanus hovered between hope and fear, and found it very difficult to determine whether he should commence or postpone his grand scheme of operations. Tiberius then tried the effect of an address to the senate; in which, announcing the death of Nero, he mentioned his associate without the least mark of honor or epithet of distinction, and ordered that no sacrifices should be offered to any one, even of the highest rank in human society. Finding that the interest of Sejanus declined in consequence of this communication, and that the senate and people were less disposed to fear him, the emperor, after propagating a report of his intention of granting to his minister a permanency of tribunitian power, sent to the conscript fathers a letter of accusation, by the medium of Macro, to whom he had privately transferred the command of the prætorian cohorts. This officer entered Rome at night, and conferred with the consul Memmius<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lvi. cap. 4.—Sueton. cap. 65.

<sup>17</sup> It appears, that new consuls were chosen for the latter part of this year;—an appointment not altogether unusual, when the importance of the office was diminished.

upon the interesting affair which had been committed to his management, but did not disclose it to the colleague of that magistrate, because he was known to be a friend of Sejanus. In the morning, as he was going to meet the senate, he stopped the minister, and declared himself the bearer of a mandate for the grant of new power to a statesman for whom the prince had so high a regard. Sejanus hastened to the hall in a transport of joy, and was saluted by the members as one whose power was confirmed. Macro took this opportunity of convincing the prætorian soldiers of his own appointment to the command; promised in the emperor's name to reward them; and, dismissing them from their attendance at the place of senatorial meeting, employed in the same service the nightly guard under Laco.

The charges against Sejanus were not distinctly expressed in the imperial letter; but, after some animadversions upon his conduct, a wish was intimated, that two senators might be punished for their connexions with him, and that he might be immediately taken into custody. Deserted by those who had placed themselves near him,—surrounded and watched by the prætors and tribunes, that he might not rush out and raise a tumult,—he exhibited strong symptoms of confusion, particularly when the consul ordered him to come forward as a criminal, and Laco appeared, ready to apprehend him. He was assailed with reproaches from all parts of the hall; his arrest was voted; and he was led away to prison amidst the insults of the people. As the prætorians, kept in order by their new commander, did not attempt to rise in behalf of the disgraced statesman, the senate, without farther delay, condemned him to death<sup>18</sup>. He who had shown himself so destitute of humanity and regardless of justice, had no

18 Di. Cass. lib. lviii. cap. 7.—Tacitus must have given an interesting account of the fall of Sejanus; but it is unfortunately lost; for we have scarcely any remains of the fifth book of his Annals.



right to expect mercy or compassion. Great joy attended his decapitation : but, if his master had suffered the same fate, the joy would have been far more general. The minister's son and daughter were also put to death. The innocent girl, when forcibly taken from her father's house, requested to be informed of the nature of her alleged offence, that she might avoid a repetition of it : the usual correction of children, she said, would reclaim her. Her artless remarks were received with a scornful smile ; and she was inhumanly strangled<sup>19</sup>.

Extreme was the anxiety of Tiberius, in the interval which elapsed from the accusation to the death of Sejanus. Dreading an insurrection of the partisans of that minister, he had prepared a small fleet to facilitate an escape. He watched, from an elevated rock, the approach of every vessel, and gazed at the distant signals. Even after the death of his enemy, he was haunted by fear and suspicion. He refused to admit the deputies who were sent from Rome to congratulate him on his good fortune : even with his consular friend Memmius he declined an interview ; and, for nine months, he confined himself to one of the twelve mansions which he had fortified at Caprea<sup>20</sup>.

The wife of Sejanus was not condemned to death ; but she would not long survive her family. She disburthened her conscience by disclosing to Tiberius the particulars of his son's death, and then put an end to her own life. The emperor's rage exceeded all bounds. He capitally punished his daughter-in-law, and all who had any concern in the treacherous machinations ; and some who had no share in the villany, were sacrificed to his fury upon mere suspicion or surmise.

<sup>19</sup> The most shameful violation of decency preceded her undeserved fate. She was deflowered by the executioner, that a virgin might not suffer the disgraceful doom which awaited her. This act of brutality is positively stated by Dio ; but Tacitus, without seeming to give entire credit to the story, merely says, that it was related by the writers of that time.

<sup>20</sup> Sueton. cap. 65.

For several years after the death of Sejanus, the sword of vengeance was drawn upon the citizens of every rank, on pretence of their attachment to that minister. Innocence was no security against the murderous tyranny of the government; and it was dangerous to assert, that Tiberius, in any of these multiplied acts of revenge, deviated from justice, or acted from mere jealousy or caprice. To regret the loss of a relative thus condemned, was considered as an insult to the emperor, and a heinous offence; and a respectable old lady, in particular, was murdered by his order, solely for lamenting the premature death of her son <sup>21</sup>.

Macro was the chief encourager or abettor of these numerous executions; and he frequently presided at those investigations which followed the disclosures or calumnies of informers. He and his master were consequently exposed to public disgust and censure; for, although the people rejoiced at the sacrifice of the chief adherents of Sejanus, and even tumultuously killed some of them, they were shocked at the indiscriminate slaughter of innocent and guilty citizens. But, when the emperor ordered the most forward and officious of these accusers to be put to death, the public applauded his regard for justice.

Amidst these fierce attacks upon all classes of his subjects, the flagitious tyrant did not forget or relinquish his animosity against the widow and the imprisoned son of

A. D. 33. Germanicus. Soon after the death of Asinius

Gallus,—who, having given offence by his regard for that family, by an occasional freedom (yet not rudeness) of speech, and by having married the former wife of Tiberius, was starved to death,—the expiration of Drusus, whose fate was similar, was announced to the se-

<sup>21</sup> Tacit. lib. vi.—At length, however (says Dio), he graciously permitted his subjects to shed the tear of sorrow, when he condescended to dismiss their relatives or friends from the world. Such dismissal he affected to consider as a favor; and it certainly was an escape from those tortures which he frequently and brutally inflicted upon prisoners of state.

nate and the people. The despot intemperately and calumniously inveighed against the ill qualities and misconduct of his persecuted relative; and, when Agrippina had either refused to take sustenance, or (which is more probable) had been deprived of it by his unrelenting cruelty, he basely accused her of having been personally connected with Gallus, whose death, he said, had so grieved her, as to prompt her to suicide <sup>22</sup>.

The emperor's resentment against Agrippina is said to have been keenly aggravated by her refusing to taste some fruit which he presented to her at an entertainment, as if she had thought it was impregnated with poison. The treacherous Sejanus, to widen the breach, had suggested to her, by his emissaries, a caution which was sure to give offence. Tiberius, turning to Livia, said, "Can any one be surprised, if I should treat with peculiar severity a person who suspects and even accuses me of such atrocity?" To stimulate a prince of his character to an act of cruelty, this provocation was not requisite. In his breast, jealousy soon assumed the form of hatred; and he would, in all probability, have shortened the life of the high-spirited Agrippina, even if no hint of her suspicions had been given <sup>23</sup>.

He had now satiated his vengeance upon the family of Germanicus, whose only surviving son he resolved to spare, as a future scourge for the Romans. The daughters <sup>24</sup> were also permitted to live, and were given in marriage to Lucius Cassius, Vinicius, and Domitius. Of these senators, the last was debauched, unprincipled, and cruel; but he was not ill-suited to the younger Agrippina.

A reference to the affairs of the East, in which Tiberius

<sup>22</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lviii. cap. 14.

<sup>23</sup> Tacit. lib. vi.—Suetonius says, that she obstinately forbore to take that nourishment which was necessary for the support of life, and that Tiberius, at one time, ordered her mouth to be forcibly kept open, and crammed with food.

<sup>24</sup> Drusilla, Julia or Livilla, and Agrippina.



could not be wholly uninterested, will serve to vary the scene of civil bloodshed Artabanus the Parthian, thinking that the emperor was so intent upon his system of internal tyranny, as to neglect foreign concerns, not only domineered over Armenia, but aimed at the conquest of Cappadocia, and even threatened to reduce under his yoke all the countries which Cyrus or Alexander had possessed. His principal subjects, however, were unwilling either to abet his ambitious schemes, or submit with patience to his arbitrary government; and they sent a secret deputation to Rome, requesting that a son of Phraates might be placed on their throne. As the prince whom Tiberius sent to receive that honor, died on his way to the promised kingdom, Tiridates, who belonged to the same family, was substituted for him; and not only Lucius Vitellius, proconsul of Syria, was ordered to support him, but the king of Iberia was engaged in the same cause by Roman influence. Between the army of this prince and the troops of Artabanus, a fierce conflict occurred in Armenia; and the result was the rescue of that country from Parthian usurpation. An aristocratic confederacy, in the mean time, so intimidated the vanquished king, that he sought protection in Hyrcania. Tiridates obtained possession of some Parthian towns; but, not acting with that activity and vigor which the contest demanded, and not being strenuously supported by Vitellius, he furnished the opposite party with an opportunity of restoring the royal fugitive; while Armenia, with the emperor's consent, was subjected to an Iberian prince <sup>25</sup>.

A. D. 55.

A. D. 56.

Death prevented all ulterior interference, on the part of Tiberius, in the affairs of Asia. He had been very fortunate in the long enjoyment of vigorous health: but, when he was in the seventy-eighth year of his age, his

constitution was visibly impaired; and it was hoped that his reign would be soon brought to a close. Wishing to conceal his weakness and indisposition, he, in some sports at Circeii, darted a javelin at a boar. He immediately felt a pain in his side; and, being exposed to a current of air, while he was heated, he found himself seriously indisposed. After occasional changes of situation, he stopped at Misenum, where his disorder increased. When he was supposed to be expiring, Caius Caligula hastened from the villa to secure the succession, but was alarmed <sup>March 16,</sup> by an account of the return of sense and speech <sup>A. D. 37.</sup> to the emperor. Macro, who courted the rising sun, immediately advised that the invalid should be smothered with a heap of clothes; and the hint was gladly adopted by Caius <sup>26</sup>.

Thus died one of the most inhuman and profligate tyrants that ever insulted human nature. He possessed penetration and ability, and well knew the duties of a man and of a prince, but shamefully neglected them, that he might indulge the baseness and depravity of his nature. He could assume the appearance of virtue, and even of refined delicacy, when dissimulation suited his purpose. If he had died before Augustus ceased to reign, he would have enjoyed the reputation of a respectable and upright citizen, if not of a benevolent and amiable man: but the possession of uncontrolled power disclosed the malignity of his disposition, and gradually led him into every vice and enormity.

26 Tacit. lib. vi.—Di. Cass. lib. lviii.

## LETTER VII.

*Sequel of the ROMAN History, to the Death of CLAUDIUS.*

A. D. 37. NEVER was the elevation of a prince attended with greater joy than that of Caligula. The people, revering the memory of his illustrious father, promised themselves a high degree of prosperity and happiness, as if the abilities and virtues of the father had been transmitted to the son. But this was an unfounded presumption. Ignorant of the true character of Caius, they fondly ascribed to him those excellencies which he did not possess, and cherished hopes which he neither permanently endeavoured nor seriously wished to realise.

By the will of the late emperor, his grandson Tiberius was declared co-heir with Caligula; but the popular son of Germanicus easily procured, from the senate and the attendant multitude, an annulment of the pretensions of his rival to pre-eminence or power<sup>1</sup>; and the imperial dignity was assigned, in its full extent, to a prince who was wholly unworthy of it.

The earlier part of the reign of Caius, however, was not disgraced by folly, misconduct, or atrocity. For seven months, he contented himself with those gratifications and pleasures which did not injure others, and abstained from the exercise of tyrannic power or despotic violence. A pleasing picture of the happiness which then pervaded the empire is given by a contemporary writer<sup>2</sup>, who compares the interval to the golden age celebrated by the poets. Peace prevailed not only in every dependent province, but in all the countries allied with Rome: the blessings of plenty were so widely diffused, that the incon-

1 Sueton. Vit. Caii Caligulæ, cap. 14.—Di. Cass. lib. lix.

2 Philo the Jew.



veniences of poverty were scarcely felt : festivity returned with each successive day : complacency and good humor appeared on every countenance : harmony and concord united all ranks. The coloring is too high ; but, after a fair allowance for exaggeration, it sufficiently appears, that, by the exercise of common sense, judgement, and humanity, the new prince might have easily prolonged the cheering prospect, and have made himself the idol of his people.

When Caius, with hypocritical grief, had paid the last honors to his predecessor, and had panegyrised him in a public oration with a flow of tears, he hastened to seek the ashes of Agrippina and his brother Nero, placed them in separate urns, and conveyed them in pompous procession to the mausoleum of Augustus. He distributed, with additions, the legacies which Tiberius had bequeathed to the soldiery and people, and paid with interest the money which he had bound himself, on his attainment of manhood, to present to the citizens. He was easily enabled to defray these charges by the fullness of the imperial treasury ; and a great sum still remained for other purposes<sup>3</sup>.

With seeming humanity, he recalled exiles, and pardoned others who had been treated as delinquents. He declared that he would not give the smallest encouragement to informers, and would not influence or over-awe the decisions of the magistrates. He restored to the people their elective suffrages, and abolished the arbitrary law of constructive treason. In some instances, he diminished the national imposts ; and he gave publicity to the financial accounts, which Tiberius had kept in a state of secrecy. To history he gave the dignity of freedom, by permitting the perusal of works which had been prohibited in the late reign. Other acts, which wore a gracious

<sup>3</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lix.—Sueton.

aspect, distinguished the first or the second year of his administration.

This conduct so augmented the popularity which had attended his inauguration, that, when he was seised with a dangerous illness, a general anxiety agitated the nation ; and his returning health was hailed with extraordinary transport, as the greatest of public blessings<sup>4</sup>. But that life of which the people thus wished the prolongation, soon proved a source of general calamity.

He professed a great regard for young Tiberius, and pretended that he would gladly admit him to a share of the sovereignty, if he did not apprehend that his youth and inexperience would render him an useless associate. Adopting him as a son, he promised to become his zealous friend, and his sedulous instructor in the art of government : but he soon threw off the mask of friendship, and showed himself a determined enemy to his innocent and unfortunate relative. On pretence of danger to his own life from the machinations of Tiberius, he commanded his rival to kill himself. After offering his breast in vain to the poignard of every one whom he met, the youth stabbed himself, and freed the emperor from all apprehension of powerful rivalry<sup>5</sup>. Jealousy, however, arose where no grounds of fear existed ; and many citizens were murdered upon a charge of aiming at, or wishing for, the death of their sovereign.

A. D. 38. The rest of Caligula's reign was little more, on his part, than a series of folly, violence, injustice, and cruelty. He carried, to a height of absurdity and extravagance, his fondness for diversion and sport. He witnessed games and exhibitions of every kind with an eagerness which would have disgraced a man of sense ; and, not content with being a spectator, he condescended

<sup>4</sup> Philonis lib. de Legatione Judæorum ad Caium, cap. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. de Legat. Jud. cap. 3.—Di. Cass. lib. lix. cap. 6.

to be an actor in the sports. He contended in the chariot-races; he fought with gladiators; he occasionally appeared as a tragedian, and sometimes as a theatrical dancer. So strong was his passion for the last amusement, that, having once summoned the senate at night for ostensible deliberation, he started up, and displayed to the astonished members his saltatorial skill and agility<sup>6</sup>. In imitation of the famed passage of Xerxes over the Hellespont, or in derision of a remark addressed to the late emperor by the soothsayer Thrasyllus (intimating that Caius would no more reign over the Romans, than he would ride on horseback over the Baian bay), he ordered a double row of small vessels to be extended over the sea, above three miles and a half, between Baiæ and the mole of Puteoli, and caused a road to be formed over this naval apparatus; and, for two days, he rode or drove a chariot backward and forward upon this bridge, attended by a troop of prætorians on foot, and a party of friends in carriages<sup>7</sup>.

While his folly provoked laughter or contempt, his rapacity exposed him to hatred, and his outrageous cruelty excited indignation and horror. To Macro, who had been his chief friend at the court of Tiberius, and had zealously promoted his interest on every occasion, he evinced the most shameful ingratitude. Disgusted at the freedom with which that officer sometimes gave political advice, he ordered him to be put to death, not sparing even his friend's wife, with whom he had been amorously connected<sup>8</sup>. Another victim of his fury was his father-in-law, Marcus Silanus, who had also ventured to offer him salutary counsel in the concerns of government. Alleging that this senator had declined embarking with him upon an agitated sea, and remained at Rome with a view of ac-

6 Di. Cass. cap. 4.

7 Sueton. cap. 19.

8 Phil. cap. 4.—Sueton. cap. 26.



quiring the chief power, if the voyage should have proved disastrous to the emperor, he drove him by menaces to an act of suicide.

Pretending that his mother had been insulted by a distinguished member of the equestrian order, Caius commanded the offender to risque a gladiatorial contest, and put him to death when he had vanquished his opponent. He murdered twenty-six other knights, in one day, on frivolous pretences; and, in the amphitheatre, when he did not find a sufficient number of criminals to be exposed to wild beasts, he gave up some of the spectators to the ferocious animals, having first ordered their tongues to be cut out, that they might not vociferously declare their innocence. He put some citizens to death for having merely entertained a friend during his severe indisposition; others, for not having evinced the deepest sorrow at the death of his sister Drusilla, whom he loved not merely with a fraternal affection, but with an incestuous passion<sup>9</sup>.

A. D. 39. Regardless of the public execration, and trusting to the passive submission of all classes of people, he prosecuted the same flagitious course with an increasing and insatiable thirst of blood. He ordered many, whom he had dismissed from prison or recalled from banishment at the beginning of his reign, to be apprehended and put to death. Many respectable individuals were compelled to fight as gladiators, until they received mortal wounds; and he witnessed their fall with undisguised pleasure. Not a few were massacred on their return from the public sports, for not manifesting the same joy with which those spectacles inspired the tyrant. When the multitude applauded a particular band of charioteers, in opposition to a party which he favored, he exclaimed with demoniac rage, "Oh, how earnestly I wish that the Roman people had only one neck!" Being

once disturbed with the noise of those who occupied the gratuitous seats in the Circus, he ordered them to be bastinadoed, and driven out ; and, when the consequent confusion and pressure had occasioned the death of twenty knights, as many matrons, and a great number of other spectators, he was highly gratified with the catastrophe.

After he had long indulged himself, both in public and private, in a severe condemnation of the government and conduct of his predecessor, he suddenly changed his tone, and, in an address to the senate, extolled the character and administration of that prince. “ I, being emperor  
“ (said he), have a full right to censure him ; but, in you,  
“ it is great presumption to inveigh against one who was  
“ your sovereign. If many citizens suffered death while  
“ he governed, the senators, by accusing and condemn-  
“ ing, deserved the chief blame (if any be imputable)  
“ for such executions.” He added, that Tiberius did not regard the members as his friends, but as his secret enemies ; and hinting, that he considered them in the same point of view, he re-enacted the law against treason, which, he said, was requisite for his security. He retired with an indignant air, while terror and silence pervaded the assembly. When the servile fathers again met, they heaped praises on the arrogant despot, thanked him for suffering them to live, voted an annual sacrifice to his clemency, and decreed an ovation to him, as if he had been victorious over a public enemy.

Although he was fond of bloodshed, he had no inclination for war ; and, therefore, when he visited Gaul, pretending that some commotions near the Rhine required his presence, no one supposed that he had any intention of acting as a military commander. He, indeed, passed that river with a formidable army ; but his march was an idle progress. He then propagated the report of an expedition to Britain, and advanced toward the ocean ; but he soon re-appeared in the interior of Gaul, and shame-

fully pillaged the provincials, murdering many of them for their wealth. Beside the Gallic victims, he at this time doomed Lentulus to death, for having acquired the esteem of the legionaries and the people, during his long administration of a German province; and his brother-in-law Lepidus, whom he had promised to nominate for his successor, was also sacrificed to his jealousy or caprice. This patrician was dissolute and profligate, and was not only the adulterous lover of the two sisters of his wife Drusilla, but was subservient to the infamous pleasures of her brother, who, though he had encouraged the illicit amours of his sisters, now banished them, as unworthy of the regard or affection of a prince so correctly moral as himself<sup>10</sup>.

The return of Caius to Rome was dreaded by the citizens, as reports were propagated of his increased ferocity. Intoxicated by adulation, and elate with the abject submission of the people to his atrocious tyranny, A. D. 40. he resolved to assert his claim to the character of a Deity. This was the mode in which he supported his claim. Herdsmen, shepherds, and other leaders of domestic quadrupeds, are beings of a far superior kind to the animals which are under their care and guidance; and, by parity of reasoning, princes, or rulers of men, may be hallowed to claim such a degree of superiority, to the human beings whom they govern, as may entitle them to a place among the Gods. Inspired with this idea, he assumed the appearance and *insignia* of Hercules and other demi-gods; but, soon deeming himself superior to those personages, he emulated the highest characters in the Greek and Roman theocracy<sup>11</sup>. At one time, he sallied forth as the winged messenger of Jove; at another time, as Apollo.

10 Di. Cass. lib. lix. cap. 18.—To his grandmother Antonia, daughter of the triumvir, he behaved with such brutal arrogance, merely because she re-proved him for his misconduct, that she killed herself in despair.

11 Phil. de Legat. Jud. cap. 6, 7.



He personated Mars with tremendous effect, attended with ferocious priests and murderous followers. Sometimes he pretended to an equality with Jupiter himself; and, in that exalted character, he administered justice to humble mortals. To vary the scene of folly, he occasionally walked with the stately air of Juno, hunted with the *paraphernalia* of Diana, or decorated himself with the attributes of the Goddess of love. He ordered sacrifices to be offered to his divinity, and a temple to be erected in honor of himself. His peculiar priests officiated in the new edifice; and his wife Cæsonia was at the head of the sacred fraternity<sup>12</sup>.

In almost all the provinces of the empire, the people, with little hesitation, gratified his vanity and arrogance with abject humility of submission: but the Jews, proud of their religious superiority, and despising the absurdities of pagan superstition and idolatry, refused to countenance the preposterous worship which he wished to enforce, or to pay him any respect beyond that which he might claim as a temporal prince. The Israelites of Alexandria, in the first instance, while the other inhabitants of that city were ready to deify the emperor and swear by his name, manifested a determined repugnance to such baseness and impiety. Alleging this refusal as a ground of disgust, the people, with the connivance of the governor, gratified their inveterate animosity against the followers of Moses, seising their property, driving them out of their houses, and putting many of them to death, with circumstances of aggravated cruelty. Deputies were sent by both parties to the imperial court; and, while they remained in Italy, the Jewish envoys were taught to expect an unfavourable result.

12 To himself, considered as a God, he, as a man, became a priest. So we are informed by Dio, who adds, that his favorite horse was declared his associate in the priesthood. The animal, indeed, was not less qualified for this office than for the consulate, to which the infatuation and phrensy of his master intended to exalt him.

avorable answer, by the intelligence which they received of a peremptory order from Caius, addressed to Petronius, governor of Syria, who was required to place the statue of his master in the sanctuary at Jerusalem, for general worship. Shocked at the intended profanation and insult, the Jews resolved to oppose the execution of the order, not indeed by arms, but by strong remonstrances. An innumerable multitude, from all parts of Judæa, marched to Ptolemais, and expostulated with Petronius upon the impolicy of outraging the religious feelings of a whole nation. The governor promised to write to Caius upon the subject, and state their objections; but he did not give them any hopes of success<sup>13</sup>.

Agrippa, the grandson of king Herod, had been favored by Caius with a tetrarchy, and honored with the royal title; and, being then at Rome, he resolved to exert his influence in behalf of his countrymen. He addressed a long letter to the emperor, respectfully arguing the question with him; referring to the state of the Jewish worship under Augustus and Tiberius, both of whom had abstained from all innovation or encroachment upon its purity; asserting the loyalty and the orderly demeanor of the people; and requesting him not to drive them to despair. Caius affected to yield to the reasoning of his friend, and countermanded the consecration of his statue in the temple of Jerusalem; but at the same time declared, that whoever should obstruct the views of those who might wish to erect altars or fix up images to his honor, in any other place than the Jewish capital, should be punished with exemplary severity; and, in a subsequent order sent to Petronius, he menaced that officer with sanguinary vengeance for neglecting the enforcement of his authority. Before the governor received intimation of the emperor's displeasure, he was gratified with intelligence

13 Phil. de Legat. cap. 9, et seq.—Josephi Antiq. lib. xviii. cap. 10, 11.

of a more agreeable nature, stating the effect of a conspiracy and of commotions at Rome<sup>14</sup>.

After a renewal of his threats of invading Britain, Caligula received, on the opposite coast, the submission of an insular chieftain and a small party of exiles, and drew up his army along the shore in defiance of the islanders. He then sent to the conscript fathers a pompous account of his extraordinary success, that he might receive, on his return to Rome, all the honors which they could bestow upon a triumphant general. Finding that his exploits were ridiculed, he declared that he would no longer be a friend to the senate; and it was apprehended, that he would issue mandates of death against the most distinguished members of that assembly<sup>15</sup>. He put some to death without even an allegation of guilt; and, when Protogenes, the chief minister of his cruelty, had marked out another for destruction, the subservient senators who sat near him acted the part of assassins. This brutal outrage so pleased the emperor, that he immediately expressed a desire of reconciliation<sup>16</sup>.

The fate which this vile prince had so long deserved, now overtook him in his criminal and flagitious career. A conspiracy was formed against him by Cassius Chærea, a prætorian officer, who execrated his master for his atrocious cruelties, and justly thought him unworthy of his power and even of life. His chief associates were, Sabinus (also an officer of the guard) and the senator Minucianus. An opportunity of action was afforded by the anniversary recurrence of a festival in honor of Augustus. Having offered a sacrifice to the memory of that prince, Caligula appeared at a theatre, but left it for the purpose Jan. 24. of taking refreshment, intending to return. In A. D. 41. a passage leading to the palace, Chærea asked him for the watch-word; and, receiving (according to custom) an

14 Joseph. Antiq.—Phil. de Legat.

15 Sueton, cap. 44, 46, 49.

16 Di. Cass. lib. lix.



indecent expression, sharply retorted the indignity. He then wounded in the neck the unsuspecting emperor, who was so confounded, that he did not even call for aid. Sabinus was the next assailant; and the blow which he gave brought the tyrant to the ground. Other conspirators rushed forward to attack him, while he was crying out, "you have not killed me yet." Being defenceless, he had no chance of escaping death, which was at length inflicted by the hand of one Aquila. The German guard, regretting the loss of a liberal master, forgot the savage tyranny which he had exercised upon others, and vented their sanguinary rage not only upon some of the assassins, but upon innocent citizens. When the senate met, many of the people clamorously demanded the punishment of the conspirators; but the assembly, not viewing the enemies of such a monster in a very criminal light, evaded the request<sup>17</sup>.

So despotic and inhuman had been the two last princes, that an escape from the most degrading and ruinous tyranny might have been supposed to be an object of general desire. That an opportunity was now offered for the restoration of the republican government, was the opinion of many senators; and the consul Saturninus, being deeply impressed with this idea, eagerly exhorted the conscript fathers to resume that authority of which they had been so unjustly deprived, and annihilate imperial usurpation. The flame of liberty spread among them: the spirit of the eloquent magistrate was applauded; and the patriotic courage of Chærea was pronounced equal, or superior, to the heroism of Brutus and Cassius. Four cohorts declared their readiness to support the senate;

<sup>17</sup> Joseph. Antiq. lib. xix. cap. 1.—Sueton. cap. 58.—Xiphil.—When some of the soldiers asked, "Who was the villain that dared to kill the emperor?" Valerius Asiaticus placed himself on an elevated spot, and cried out, "I wish that I had been the man who performed that act of justice!" His boldness over-awed the military rabble, and contributed to the restoration of tranquillity.

but the rest of the soldiery resolved to follow a different course. The liberalities of Caligula had allayed, among the troops, the odium of his atrocities; and they hoped, under the sway of another emperor, to be more favored than by republican rulers. As the people in general seemed to entertain similar sentiments, the hopes of the aristocratic leaders were not very strong or confident.

In the confusion which followed the punishment of Caligula, Claudius, the son of Drusus, and consequently uncle to the tyrant, by whom his life was spared in contempt for his supposed idiotism, concealed himself amidst the hangings of a door in a balcony, that he might not be an object of sanguinary assault. But, as he had no share in the enormities of his nephew, he had no reason to dread the vengeance of the conspirators. Some soldiers, who were wandering about the palace, drew him from his lurking-place, and, while he humbly implored their mercy, saluted him as emperor, out of regard to the memory of his brother Germanicus. He was conducted to the camp, and received with acclamations. The senate sent deputies to remonstrate against this irregular election of an emperor, and to dissuade Claudius from an acceptance of that dignity which the assembly wished, for the public good, to supersede and abolish. He would probably have relinquished the high appointment, if the officers and his friend Agrippa had not strongly exhorted him to retain it. Tutors by the Jewish prince, he answered the deputies with a promise of conducting himself in such a manner, that no one should have reason to complain of the continuance of monarchical government; and, having wrought his mind to the firmness of decision, he promised to reward his military friends with an ample donative for their zeal in his cause<sup>18</sup>.

When the senate re-assembled, another body of soldiers

18 Joseph. Antiq. lib. xiv. cap. 2, 3.—Sueton. Vit. Claudii, cap. 10.

clamorously demanded the nomination of an emperor, instead of the restoration of republican sway. The intimidated fathers, resigning their hopes of freedom, gave their assent to the elevation of some distinguished senator: but the risque of a civil war, if any one should oppose Claudius, deterred the principal members from asserting their pretensions. Chærea and his associates declared that they would not consent to the appointment of Claudius. "We have suffered enough already (said the bold conspirator) from the government of a madman; and shall we now be so imprudent as to submit to an idiot?" Disregarding this judicious appeal to their common sense, the soldiers drew their swords, and hastened to join those who had given their interest to Claudius. No farther opposition was made (except for a moment by Sabinus) to the military choice of a master. The consuls and senators hastened to pay their respects to the new emperor, who, among his first acts of power, put Chærea to death, but spared the life of Sabinus, thinking that he had acted more from principle than any of his associates in the conspiracy. Unwilling, however, to survive his friend, or repining at the continuance of arbitrary sway, Sabinus committed suicide. Lupus, whom Chærea had employed in the assassination of Caligula's wife and infant daughter, suffered the fate of his leader.

The early acts of Claudius were prudent and judicious. Instead of treasuring in his memory (as Tiberius would have done) the deliberations and proposals respecting a change of government, he threw a veil over the whole, and even promoted to official trust some of those senators who had been particularly eager for a republican revolution, or those who, when monarchy was preferred, were pointed out as candidates for the sovereignty. He would not suffer any accusation or process to be instituted upon the law against treason; and such as were in confinement or in exile, under charges of this kind, were liberated or recalled



by his order. He annulled the reprehensible ordinances and irregular proceedings of Caligula, and restored considerable property which that prince and Tiberius had acquired from different families, to the prejudice of the lawful heirs. He attended with diligence to judicial concerns, and pronounced or promoted just decisions. He discountenanced immorality and vice, and discouraged every species of criminality. The senate he treated with respect: to the people he was gracious and complaisant. He prohibited the offer of sacrifices to himself, or of that reverence which bordered upon adoration<sup>19</sup>.

This course he did not long pursue. His feebleness of mind soon subjected him to the yoke of his wife Messalina (one of the most vicious and profligate women of whom history condescends to make mention), and of three unprincipled men, who had emerged from a state of slavery to the dignity of statesmen. These were, his secretary Narcissus, his financier Pallas, and Calistus, a freedman of the late emperor. Under the influence of such advisers, the subsequent portion of his reign chiefly exhibited a tissue of capricious tyranny, shameless rapine, and nefarious cruelty.

In the concerns of foreign policy and of war, Claudius soon interfered. He rewarded the friendly zeal of Agrippa, by adding, to the territories which he already governed, such an extent of country as rendered him the chief potentate in Judæa. To Herod, the brother of that prince, he gave the small kingdom of Chalcis. He restored the Iberian realm, and that of Comagene, to the princes whom his predecessor had deposed, and gave part of Cilicia to Polemon, in exchange for the Bosporic kingdom, which he assigned to a descendant of the great Mithridates. A war having arisen in Mauritania, which the Romans wished to reduce entirely under their yoke,

19 Di. Cass. lib. lx. cap. 3—5.—Sueton.

Suetonius Paulinus met with great success, carrying his arms to the foot of Mount Atlas. Geta was more  
 A. D. 42. decisively victorious ; and the effect of his exploits appeared in the subjugation of that extensive region which afterward composed the Cæsarian and Tingitan Mauritania<sup>20</sup>.

The success of the imperial arms, and the reputed strength of the government, did not over-awe the people into complete or universal submission. Camillus Scribonianus, governor of Dalmatia, shocked at various acts of tyranny, particularly at the sacrifice of a distinguished patrician<sup>21</sup> to the animosity of Messalina, whom he had offended by a rejection of her amorous overtures, endeavoured to rouse the Romans to an assertion of their invaded rights. Some senators and knights joined him, and many others promised to promote his views. A part of the army also engaged to support him ; and he began to entertain hopes of dethroning Claudius. He addressed a letter to the imbecile prince, reproaching him for his misgovernment, and threatening him with public vengeance, if he would not consent to an immediate retreat from power. Intimidated by this denunciation, the emperor called a council of his ministers and principal subjects, and asked their advice with regard to the expediency of relinquishing the sovereignty<sup>22</sup>. If they had urged him to take such a step, he would have complied with the suggestion ; but they exhorted him to trust to the attachment of his people, and defy all the attempts of insur-

<sup>20</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lx. cap. 7, 8.

<sup>21</sup> This victim was Appius Silanus, for whose ruin a dream was alleged by Narcissus, importing that he was on the point of murdering the emperor. Messalina pretending that she had a similar dream, Claudius was so alarmed, when he heard of the approach of Appius, whom his two adversaries had summoned to the imperial bed-chamber on pretence of consultation, that he gave orders for his immediate death ; and the villanous freedman was publicly thanked for watching, even during sleep, over the safety of his patron. Suetonius.

<sup>22</sup> Di. Cass lib. lx. cap. 15.—Sueton.

gents and rebels. The soldiers who had professed a willingness to assist Scribonianus were deterred by a supposed omen, and probably discouraged by deliberate reflexion, from persisting in a revolt ; and the deserted leader, retiring to the isle of Issa, either put an end to his own life, or was killed by one of his soldiers<sup>23</sup>. Many persons of both sexes were apprehended on suspicion of being concerned in these treasonable machinations ; and even freedmen, not only of the middle class, but of the highest rank, were tortured with a view to confession, although Claudius had sworn that he would only enforce this practice in the examination of slaves. A considerable number suffered death in consequence of condemnation ; while others, not expecting mercy or a fair trial, were induced to offer violence to themselves. Some, who were accused or suspected, purchased safety by gratifying the rapacity of Messalina and Narcissus. It was thought a favor, in this inhuman court, to grant impunity to the children of the supposed offenders ; and the emperor was even so gracious, as to allow some of the sons to possess the property of their fathers<sup>24</sup>.

This was not the only occasion on which Claudius was so alarmed, as to think of resigning his power. When he was employed in sacrificing, a knight was discovered near him with a sword or a knife, as if he intended to attack the sacred person of his sovereign. The emperor, agitated with terror, immediately convoked the senate ; bewailed, with the effeminacy of tears, his wretched fate, in being exposed to continual danger by his exalted station ; and, for some time, declined appearing in public.

The timidity of Claudius did not discourage him from

<sup>23</sup> Tacit. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 75.—Plin. Epist. lib. iii.

<sup>24</sup> Di. Cass. lib. lx.—Sueton. cap. 13, 35, 37.—It was in consequence of this insurrection, that capital condemnation was denounced against Pætus, whose wife Arria exhibited, on the melancholy occasion, a strength of affection which disdained the thought of surviving him, and an instance of courage which has furnished an interesting subject for the pencil.



venturing upon a distant expedition. A fugitive named

A. D. 43. Beric, whom one of the princes of Britain had

banished for seditious practices, persuaded him to send an army to that island, assuring him that internal divisions, and the superiority of Roman valor and discipline, would render conquest an easy task. The advice was readily followed; and Plautius, landing with a respectable force, obtained several victories over the islanders. Claudius was so pleased at the intelligence of this success, that he hoped to entitle himself, without serious danger, to the honors of a triumph. He had no military skill, and was even destitute of ordinary courage: but, as the mere parade of war seemed likely to be sufficient for his purpose, he ventured to put himself at the head of the legions in Britain. Supported by the fame of Plautius, he advanced against the intimidated barbarians, and reduced some of their princes to submission<sup>25</sup>. The people were less offended at being disarmed by the conqueror, than pleased at his abstaining from rapine and confiscation. A splendid triumph was allowed to him by the exulting senate, after his return from this expedition,

A. D. 44. which, though not so important as to comprehend a great extent of conquest, paved the way to the subjugation of South-Britain. In commemoration of his success, the name of *Britannicus* was given to a son whom Messalina had borne to him.

Satisfied with the glory of having extended the Roman dominion, he did not personally attempt any other military enterprise. He contented himself with the reputation of a prudent discharge of political functions; or (I may rather say) he governed by caprice, without regard to the public opinion of his character and conduct. There was no consistency in his administration: he was sometimes rational, prudent, and moderate; at other times, un-

<sup>25</sup> Without a battle, says Suetonius; but, according to Dio, after a vigorous conflict.

reasonable, tyrannical, and inhuman. His cruelty was carried to an enormous extent: thirty-five senators, and more than three hundred knights, are said to have been put to death under his sway, beside a multitude of his inferior subjects. Even his own relatives, if hints to their prejudice were thrown out by Messalina or his favorite freedmen, were murdered, without hesitation or remorse, by this despicable tool of villany. His niece, the wife of Vinicius, and Julia, the grand-daughter of Tiberius, were dismissed from the world, without the least proof of any kind of delinquency, and without being suffered to vindicate or defend themselves<sup>26</sup>. The husband of the former lady was afterward poisoned by order of the em-  
press, whom he had unpardonably offended by  
refusing to rush into her embrace. While many innocent persons suffered death, Claudius sometimes spared the lives of those who were guilty. Asinius Gallus, son of the divorced wife of Tiberius, conspired against him, and was only banished.

A. D. 46.

The case of Valerius Asiaticus deserves more particular notice. He had given offence by his spirited  
behaviour, and his just indignation against ty-  
ranny, at the time of Caligula's death: his great wealth and extensive connexions excited jealousy; and one who had been twice consul, even in the degraded state of the magistracy, was always considered as highly respectable and dignified. Messalina eagerly promoted his condemnation, upon a charge of his aiming at the sovereignty. She knew that the accusation was false: but the rapacious prostitute wished to become the possessor of the spacious gardens, formerly belonging to Lucullus, which had been greatly improved by Valerius, the present proprietor. Being seised at Baiæ, he was sent prisoner to Rome, accused by the courtly eloquence of Suilius, and, after an

A. D. 47.

<sup>26</sup> Sueton. cap. 29.

able and pathetic defence, seemed to be on the point of acquittal, when a treacherous appeal, from the consul Lucius Vitellius, to the infatuated emperor, turned the scale against him. The vile sycophant of Messalina<sup>27</sup>, with tears and supplications, entreated Claudius to acknowledge the services of Valerius, and testify his clemency by granting him full permission to die in any mode which he might prefer. As if this had been an humble request of the accused senator, the weak and cruel prince instantly granted it; and Valerius, being thus iniquitously condemned, opened his veins<sup>28</sup>.

The abandoned woman whose pernicious influence had occasioned so many deaths, hastened her own  
 A. D. 48. ruin by adulterous criminality. Being enamored of Silius, the consul elect, whose personal attractions rendered him the favorite of the fair, she compelled him to repudiate his wife, and resign himself to her uncontrolled will. Sensible of his being exposed by the mere connexion to the utmost danger, her lover was emboldened to go farther, and to add treason to adultery. Having enlisted his friends and dependents in a conspiracy, he declared that he would marry her and adopt her son, and seize the imperial dignity, before her husband had the least suspicion of such machinations; and, while Claudius was at Ostia, the nuptials were solemnised at Rome, with a defiance of all concealment<sup>29</sup>.

This audacious insult, this profligate marriage, excited general disgust, rather than surprise; for, after the former conduct of Messalina, nothing that she could do was likely to arouse the latter sensation. The emperor's counsellors were doubtful with regard to that conduct which was most expedient on this occasion. One of them advised, that peremptory menaces should be used in the hope of drawing off the adulteress from the love of Silius, with a pro-

<sup>27</sup> Yet he is called, by Suetonius, *vir innocens*.

<sup>28</sup> Tacit. Annales, lib. xi. cap. 1—3.

<sup>29</sup> Tacit. lib. xi. cap. 12, 26.



mise of concealing the late disgraceful proceedings : another, influenced by fear, recommended entire forbearance ; while Narcissus resolved to disclose the whole affair to his master. Two women, who were familiarly known to Claudius, were deputed to make this interesting communication ; and Narcissus, being immediately summoned into the imperial presence, hinted the danger of an assumption of power on the part of Silius. This appeal to the fears of the prince had a decisive effect. He was little affected at the disgrace which he suffered as a husband ; while he dreaded the loss of his authority. In his progress to the camp near Rome, he frequently asked, with an air of anxiety, whether he was still emperor. Not having full confidence in the attachment of Geta, the prætorian præfect, he invested Narcissus with the temporary command of the cohorts. That minister was particularly apprehensive of the influence which the entreaties of an artful wife might have over a weak husband, and therefore studiously endeavoured to prevent an interview between them <sup>30</sup>.

Messalina and her paramour, in the mean time, seemed to think only of pleasure. They celebrated the festival of the vintage with bacchanalian revelry and intemperate jollity. Too soon arrived the alarming intelligence of the emperor's approach, with denunciations of vengeance. While Silius hastened to the *forum*, Messalina went to meet her offended lord, whom she hoped to appease by her supplications, and by the sight of Britannicus and Octavia, the offspring of that marriage which was perfectly regular and legal. As soon as she beheld him, she endeavoured to rouse his affectionate feelings ; but Narcissus counter-acted her aims, by reprobating her late criminality, and referring to her former acts of lasciviousness and profligacy ; and he ordered the removal of the child-

ren, while Claudius remained silent and seemingly unaffected.

Being led to the camp, the emperor, in a short speech which was dictated by the minister, persuaded the soldiers to support his honor and interest. They called for the punishment of the guilty; and, when Silius (who did not defend his conduct or implore mercy) had suffered death, the senator Virgilianus and other friends of the two chief delinquents were treated with equal rigor.

When Claudius had returned to his palace, and was exhilarated with wine, he desired that a message might be sent to his wife, permitting her to plead her cause before him in the morning. Narcissus, aware of his danger, if the arts of Messalina should produce a reconciliation, rushed out, and ordered a military tribune to put her instantly to death, alleging the emperor's positive command. She was then in a garden with her mother Lepida, who exhorted her to die by her own hands, rather than by the stroke of the executioner. She wept, and complained of her unhappy fate; and, having feebly directed a sword to her throat and breast, was effectually stabbed by the tribune<sup>31</sup>. Her death could not be generally lamented, as she mingled atrocious cruelty with insatiable lust.

The emperor received the report of Messalina's death, without inquiring whether she had fallen by her own hand or by the sword of justice; and he continued drinking, as if nothing important had occurred. He was even so stupidly forgetful, that, when he retired to rest, he asked why his lady did not come, as usual, to his chamber<sup>32</sup>.

Although he had declared, that a recollection of his inauspicious marriages would induce him to pass the rest of his life in celibacy, and even assured the prætorian soldiers, that he would offer his breast to their swords, if he

<sup>31</sup> Tacit. lib. xi. cap. 37, 38.—Di. Cass. lib. lx.

<sup>32</sup> Sueton. cap. 39—Other instances of his mental absence and want of thought are mentioned by the same biographer.

should ever violate this promise, he immediately began to seek another wife. Many ladies of distinction aspired to his hand : but the chief competition was between his niece Agrippina and Lollia, the daughter of a distinguished senator. Each of these ladies had one of the ministers to support her pretensions. Agrippina, however, trusted more to her own arts, and to the love with which, in the familiar interviews of consanguinity, she had inspired the amorous prince, than to the warm recommendation of her friend Pallas ; and even the consideration of incest did not check the matrimonial eagerness either of the uncle or the niece. Such a marriage was unprecedented at Rome ; but the senate readily voted, that any persons, not more nearly related to each other, might in future be legally united. The nuptials were quickly solemnised ; and A. D. 49. Agrippina became, in effect, the ruler of the empire. To cement the connexion, she proposed a marriage between her son Domitius and Octavia. This young princess had been betrothed to Silanus ; but, by accusing him of indecorous familiarities with his sister, and threatening him with vengeance, Lucius Vitellius, the sycophant of the new empress, drove him to suicide. That union which was intended as a step to the supplantation of Britannicus, was now settled, but not yet accomplished<sup>33</sup>.

Having thus commenced a career of ambition and tyranny, Agrippina continued it with shameless audacity. By fabricating a charge of disaffection against Lollia, she exposed her to the miseries of confiscation and exile ; and, not content with this injustice, sent an officer to drive her to despair and death. Other ladies also felt the effects of her jealousy and hatred. Success fostered her pride and arrogance ; and she perpetrated, without remorse, numerous acts of fraud, rapine, and cruelty.

While Claudius weakly connived at his wife's misgo-

33 Tacit. lib. xii, cap. 1—9.—Sueton. cap. 26, 27.



vernment, he did not entirely neglect foreign affairs. An application being made to him and the senate by the Parthian nobles, who wished to supersede the tyrannical Gotarzes by the election of Meherdates, son of Vonones, the emperor approved their choice, and gave the candidate some good advice for the regulation of his conduct. Gotarzes, by his arbitrary and cruel acts, had involved himself in a contest with his brother Bardanes, who promptly over-ran several provinces : but the two rivals, when they were ready to risque a decisive battle, agreed to an accommodation, by which Bardanes obtained the crown, while his brother retired into Hyrcania. The war being renewed by the reviving ambition of Gotarzes, the younger brother was again victorious, and established his military fame by a great extension of the Parthian territories. His success transporting him into tyranny, he was assassinated when he was hunting; and Gotarzes recovered his authority ; but, on his renewal of despotism, the Roman governor of Syria was ordered to escort Meherdates to the frontiers of the realm, and promote his elevation to the sovereignty. The acquisition of the brilliant prize at which he aimed, did not prove so easy a task as he expected. He received promises of aid from the king of Adiabene and the prince of Edessa ; but, with treacherous inconstancy, these princes drew off their troops after they had outwardly joined him ; and, having only his Parthian adherents under his standard, he was defeated by Gotarzes, and lost all hope of royalty. Vologeses, who reigned after the death of the victorious monarch, endeavoured to put the Parthians again in possession of Armenia, which was then governed by Mithridates, a friend of the Romans. Pharasmanes the Iberian, brother to this prince, having a son<sup>34</sup> who was popular and ardently desirous of power, had sent him with an army to dethrone his uncle,

34 Rhadamistus.

that he might not be tempted to gratify his ambition in his own country. The youth, having driven Mithridates into a fortress which had a Roman garrison, bribed the commandant to betray the king; murdered him and his children, and seized the realm. Vinjdus, governor of Syria, was inclined to chastise the assassin; but his chief officers advised him not to interfere, alleging that it was good policy to leave the barbarians for a time to the effect of their own dissensions and cruelties. Vologeses took this opportunity of invading Armenia, which, during the remainder of the reign of Claudius, was a scene of sanguinary contest between him and the usurper<sup>35</sup>.

Of the state of Germany the emperor so far took notice, as to provide for the security of the country near the Rhine. The incursions of the Catti diffusing an alarm through the neighbouring territories, Pomponius, who could well delineate tragic scenes for theatrical representation, had an opportunity of acquiring fame in the field of slaughter. He so humbled the marauders by the vigor of his attack, that they sent hostages to Rome for their future forbearance. With the Suevi, when they had expelled a king to whom they had been subjected by the Romans, Claudius was not disposed to remonstrate, but was content with affording protection in Pannonia to the fugitive prince and his friends.

In Britain, the Roman arms prospered, without the necessity of sending over fresh legions to the island. Ostorius erected forts, planted colonies, A. D. 51. quelled insurrections in various parts, and defeated a confederate army, commanded by Caractacus, who fell with his family into the hands of the conqueror. Pleased at the captivity of a bold chieftain, Claudius desired that he might be sent to the imperial metropolis; and, having received him with pompous parade, admitted his apolo-

35 Tacit. lib. xii. cap. 10—15, 44—51.

gies for his long opposition to the Romans, and granted him that protection which, with modest dignity, he solicited.

The weak prince continued to be influenced by his domineering wife, who, having procured, from his facility of compliance, the adoption of her son<sup>36</sup>, discountenanced Britannicus with studious malignity, and even instigated the emperor to put to death, or banish, the preceptors and chief domestics of the young prince, that she might substitute artful spies for faithful attendants. The unnatural father, even in these points, yielded to the suggestions of the cruel step-mother; and the life of an amiable youth was exposed to constant danger<sup>37</sup>.

The arrogance and tyranny of an unprincipled female could not be altogether agreeable to the senate or the people; but every violent or unjustifiable act was received with general acquiescence. The degraded assembly flattered the contemptible despot and the unworthy partner of his power; and the groveling nation hugged the chain of servitude.

In moments of reflexion, which did not often occur to Claudius, he was ashamed of the tyranny that was exercised over him. When his ministers were applauding a sentence which he had pronounced against an adulterous woman, he remarked, that he was destined to bear for a time the infamous conduct of his wives, and ultimately to punish them<sup>38</sup>. This speech decided his doom.

His adulterous and inhuman wife resolved to remove him from the world, that her power, of which she dreaded the loss, might be fully enjoyed under the government of her nearest relative. She first procured the condemnation and death of Lepida, from the mere impulse of feminine jealousy, and even obliged her son to give evidence, on a charge of sedition, against the obnoxious

36 Under the name of Nero, the *cognomen* of the Claudian family.

37 Tacit. lib. xii. cap. 41.

38 Sueton. cap. 43.



lady, although she was his aunt, and was supposed to enjoy his regard and affection. In vain did Narcissus reprobate the calumnious charge; in vain did he lament the dangerous influence of Agrippina. Having sent him into Campania for the benefit of his health, that he might not be able to assist his imperial friend, she employed Locusta (whose skill in poisoning was notorious) in providing or preparing a deleterious substance, to be mingled with some favorite article of food. The eunuch, whose duty it was to taste every thing that might be offered to the emperor, was seduced into the treacherous plot; and, when the luxurious prince was not upon his guard, he greedily devoured a poisoned mushroom. The consuls and priests were publicly praying for his recovery, at a time when his wife and her son, knowing that he had expired, were employed in removing all obstacles to their ambitious views<sup>39</sup>.

Claudius, when young, was considered by all who knew him, as unfit, from his natural imbecility and fatuity, for public life. Even after he had acquired some degree of erudition, and had shown himself not deficient in eloquence, he daily excited ridicule and contempt by the absurdity and incoherence of his remarks. Sometimes, when he presided at the tribunal, he spoke pertinently and judiciously; but, in general, he had rather the appearance of a man who had escaped from a receptacle of lunatics, than of an able judge or an intelligent prince. He had so little firmness of mind, that he was, in almost every act of government, subservient to the will of others—not merely in immaterial points, but in affairs of the greatest importance. When stimulated by a wife or a minister, he was ready to shed the blood of his best subjects, and to commit any other act of flagitious atrocity; and, when persons who were obnoxious to his favorites or

39 Tacit. lib. xii. cap. 65—68.—Di. Cass. lib. lx.

counsellors were put to death without his order, he was so far from punishing those who had abused his authority, that he approved the illegal acts, as arising from a friendly regard for his interest, and a fervent zeal for the public good. Even when he was left to his own feelings, he manifested a cruelty of disposition, unworthy of a liberal mind. He coolly witnessed the tortures of supposed criminals, and viewed with savage unconcern those sports which were attended with death<sup>40</sup>. This behaviour, however, might be produced by the stupidity of indifference, as much as by a bad heart.

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## LETTER VIII.

*Continuation of the ROMAN History, to the Death of NERO.*

A. D. 54. DOMITIUS, or Nero, had not completed his seventeenth year, when his adoptive father ceased to reign. The anxious zeal of his mother for his succession prompted her to obstruct all attempts which Britannicus might be disposed to make for the acquisition of the sovereignty. She detained her step-son in the palace by a show of affection, and by various pretences, until those arrangements which were dictated by her artful and treacherous policy were fully matured. Nero then sallied forth with an air of confidence and joy, accompanied by Burrhus, who recommended him to the prætorian troops as a worthy successor of their deceased sovereign. "Where is Britannicus? Why does not he make his appearance?" were questions that were instantly put by some of the soldiers, but not answered. As this young

prince seemed to wave his pretensions by not appearing to maintain them, the soldiers saluted Nero as their sovereign: the senate confirmed the irregular election; the citizens and provincials acquiesced in the appointment. The will of Claudius was not produced, because the declared preference of a step-son to his own offspring might have excited disgust<sup>1</sup>.

Not the new emperor, but his mother, commenced the inauspicious reign with an act of murderous atrocity. The proconsul Silanus, a descendant of Augustus, distinguished by his integrity, prudence, and moderation, was mentioned by some of the people as far more worthy of the imperial dignity than the inexperienced youth who had so hastily obtained it. He was immediately marked out as a victim, although he had not the least intention of being a rival to Nero; and two of Agrippina's emissaries poisoned him at an entertainment<sup>2</sup>.

Narcissus was the next victim. He had freely animadverted on the impropriety of Agrippina's conduct; and this, in her opinion, was an unpardonable offence. When a new wife was proposed for Claudius, after the death of Messalina, he had recommended Ælia Petina, from whom the emperor had formerly divorced himself upon frivolous pretences. This also was a ground of disgust; and his regard for Britannicus was another source of animosity. He was either put to death, or driven to suicide. His great wealth formed a seasonable accession to the treasury, when a prodigal prince had entered upon the government. The letters which he had in his possession he honorably committed to the flames, that they might not be brought forward to criminate any one<sup>3</sup>.

A contest for administrative power arose in the imperial cabinet, between Agrippina and Pallas on the one hand, and Seneca and Burrhus on the other. Nero was apparently more

1 Tacit. Annales, lib. xii. cap. 68, 69.

2 Tacit. lib. xiii. cap. 1.

3 Di. Cass. lib. lx. cap. penult.—Tacit.



inclined, in this early stage of his political progress, to listen to the moderate counsels of the philosopher and the præfect, than to the arbitrary injunctions of his haughty parent<sup>4</sup>: yet he treated her with great respect, and dignified her with the highest exterior honors. He publicly declared, that he would follow, in his government, the maxims and rules of Augustus; and, for some time, he adhered to his promise. Affability, liberality, and clemency, marked his demeanor and conduct; concessions of various kinds, and studied gratifications, seemed to announce a good heart. When a warrant for the death of a criminal was offered for his signature, he affected a tenderness of feeling which even opposed the demands of justice; exclaiming, “I wish that I had never learned to “write!” The thanks of the senate being intimated to him on a particular occasion, he modestly answered, “Let “me first deserve that honor<sup>5</sup>!”

While he pursued this popular course, the public attention was called to the perturbed state of Armenia. It was not the wish or the interest of the Romans, that this country should become a province of Parthia; and the people anxiously desired to know how their youthful sovereign would act—whether he would make a personal campaign, choose a general from the sole recommendation of merit, or ward off the danger by address and policy. He soon convinced them, that he was not inflamed with military ambition; and he pleased them by his judicious choice of a commander, and by making such arrangements as over-awed the Parthians into a temporary retreat from Armenia.

The political contention in the Roman court was soon decided against Agrippina, whose endeavours to  
A. D. 55. check her son’s amorous inclinations particularly contributed to the ruin of her influence. His wife Octa-

<sup>4</sup> Xiphil. Epit. Dionis.

<sup>5</sup> Sueton. Vit. Neronis, cap. 10.

via, having been chosen for him by his mother from motives of ambition, no longer pleased him after he had gratified his aspiring views; and, being captivated with the attractions of a freed-woman named Acte, he formed an intimate connexion with her, in defiance of the remonstrances, reproaches, and threats of Agrippina; who, finding asperity useless, had recourse to conciliatory mildness, begged him to excuse her warmth of temper, and promised to throw a veil over his indiscretions. Her subsequent submission did not induce him to forgive her former freedom of censure; and, when she had, on his presentation of a splendid article of dress, insinuated that he only gave back a small part of the immense gift which he had received through her means, he was so incensed at her supercilious answer, that he dismissed her friend Pallas from all ministerial employment. Her rage now broke out into menaces of dethronement. She declared, that she would espouse the cause of her injured step-son, and attend him to the camp, to promote his elevation to the throne of his father. This young prince had roused the jealousy of Nero, at a public festivity, by singing an ode, allusive to his being supplanted in his high pretensions, in accents which filled his auditors with compassion: and, as Agrippina had announced herself for his patroness, the emperor resolved to put an end to the rivalry of the unfortunate youth by an act of summary atrocity. A prætorian tribune and the infamous Locusta were employed to poison him. In one and the same night Britannicus was at a banquet with his relatives, suddenly became speechless and lifeless, and was hurried to the funeral pile<sup>6</sup>.

This murder excited no effusions of public indignation, and produced no attempt to shake off the yoke of inci-

6 Tacit. Ann. lib. xiii.—For this service, Locusta, who was under condemnation for other acts of the same horrible nature, not only received pardon, but was rewarded with a considerable estate, and even allowed to take pupils! Suetonius.

pient tyranny. Many were even disposed to forgive an act which tended to secure the national tranquillity, without considering that it portended a series of outrages and enormities.

The villany of her son did not intimidate Agrippina. She held political conferences with her friends, and exercised all the arts of persuasion in forming a powerful party. Even her avarice did not prevent her from employing a part of her great wealth in strengthening her interest. Resenting her conduct, Nero deprived her of her guard, and dismissed her from the palace. Her power seemed instantly to vanish: she was avoided by all, except some companions of her own sex; and her machinations consequently afforded no real ground of alarm. Yet her son resolved to seek an opportunity of sacrificing her to his vengeance. The animosity of one of her female associates furnished him with a pretence for proceeding against her as an enemy of the state. Silana having accused her of an intention of procuring the sovereignty for Rubellius (a descendant of Augustus), whom she had marked out for her future husband, Nero seemed to think himself justified in giving an order for her death: but Burrhus checked that sanguinary impetuosity which disdained inquiry, and insisted upon an investigation of the charge. Being interrogated by Seneca and the præfect, she haughtily asserted her innocence, and desired to see her son, that she might convince him of the calumnious malice of her accuser. The emperor condescended to admit her exculpation, conferred posts of honor and profit upon some of her friends, punished Silana with exile, and put one of her suborned accomplices to death; but he pardoned Paris, the theatrical performer, who had been employed as a communicator of the charge. This entertainer of the public was a favorite of his imperial master, to whose debaucheries he was shamefully subservient<sup>7</sup>.



Nero had not yet thrown off the mask, so as fully to exhibit his vicious, profligate, and mischievous character : but he soon became grossly licentious, luxurious, dissolute, abominably libidinous, rapacious, and cruel beyond all former example. He found a passive herd ready to bear his insults, submit to his outrages, and acquiesce in his enormities. Yet this obsequious servility did not preclude the occasional manifestation of discontent.

His youth could not excuse the indecorous, dishonorable, and brutal practices, in which he indulged himself before he had completed the second year of his reign. He frequently sallied forth in the evening, disguised as a slave, with companions of his own stamp ; insulted females by loose speeches and freedom of contact ; attacked the citizens who were quietly passing through the streets, wantonly struck them, wounded and even killed

A. D. 56.

some ; carried off commodities which were exposed to sale ; and rioted in the lowest houses of entertainment<sup>s</sup>. A man of rank, whose wife had been rudely treated by the imperial debauchee, beat him so severely, that he was, for some days, unfit and ashamed to appear in public. This *rencontre* shocked Nero's opponent, when he discovered the exalted rank of the person whom he had chastised ; and, being menaced by the exasperated prince, he slew himself. A recollection of his danger induced the emperor, when he renewed his nocturnal excursions, to order soldiers and gladiators to follow him, at a distance not too great for his easy rescue or defence.

In the midst of his sensual indulgences, vicious gratifications, and cruel acts, he sometimes conducted himself with prudence and propriety. When the ingratitude of freedmen to their former masters, and their frequent criminality, came under consideration in the senatorial assembly, it was proposed by some members, that patrons should have the power of revoking the grant of liberty :

<sup>s</sup> Sueton. cap. 26.—Xiphil.—Tacit.

but he was of opinion that such authority would leave a numerous body of men at the mercy of others, who might be tempted to act with arbitrary caprice; and he therefore confirmed the determination of the majority, who voted that the acquired rights of freedmen should be maintained inviolate, while the particular offences of any of the number should be liable to separate cognisance. In concert with the senate, he enacted other regulations, one of which checked all irregular exercise of power on the part of the ædiles, while another repressed the encroachments of the tribunes upon the authority of the prætors and consuls. He also brought several governors to justice for mal-administration; and he prohibited games and shows from being given, in any of the imperial dependencies, by a proconsul, proprætor, or procurator, because he knew that those magistrates defrayed the charges of such diversions by fleecing the provincials.

Among a variety of impeachments, that of Suilius excited extraordinary attention. He was formerly  
A. D. 58. the quæstor of Germanicus; and, although he had been banished for judicial corruption, Claudius received him at his court, and retained him as an intimate friend and counsellor. Many acts of injustice and cruelty, committed in the reign of that prince, were imputed to this delinquent. When he alleged that he had merely obeyed the commands of his sovereign, he was contradicted by Nero, who, referring to the historical *memoranda* left by Claudius, treated the assertion as a libel upon his predecessor. The orders of Messalina were then stated in extenuation of guilt: but this pretence was likewise over-ruled; and Suilius was banished to one of the Balearic islands. Satisfied with the father's condemnation, the emperor refused to allow any process against the accused son.

After the exterior reconciliation between Nero and his

mother, she remained for some years without being assailed by any serious accusation : but, when Poppæa Sabina, a beautiful and engaging but profligate woman, had been taken by the young voluptuary from the arms of Otho, who had seduced her from her husband Rufus, the dowager empress was exposed to the greatest danger from the insinuations and influence of the new mistress. Eager to draw the amorous prince into the nuptial bond, and not expecting to succeed in her sinister purpose while Agrippina lived, Poppæa used every art to inflame him against his parent, whom she accused of the most treasonable aims. He pretended that he felt a great reluctance to all rigor, when a mother was the object of attack : he merely wished to secure himself, he said, against her seditious intrigues. But he was at length induced to plunge himself into the atrocious guilt of the most unnatural of all murders. A. D. 59.

The mode of perpetrating this horrible enormity, employed the anxious thoughts of the impious son. The administration of poison seemed to be the most feasible expedient, and it was therefore repeatedly tried : but it appeared, as might have been expected, that Agrippina was fortified by scrupulous caution and by powerful antidotes. The sword could not be so artfully employed as to elude detection. After long deliberation, an extraordinary contrivance was suggested by Anicetus, the commander of an imperial fleet, who promised to construct a galley in such a manner, that a part of its frame might suddenly give way, and hurl the passengers amidst the waves. Pleased at the thought, Nero invited his mother to meet him at Baïæ, where an anniversary festival was to be celebrated. He treated her with that studied respect and that over-acted affection which ought to have excited her suspicion, and detained her to a late hour at the festive board<sup>10</sup>. She

<sup>10</sup> His last words, after a seemingly-fond embrace, were, "Farewell, my dear mother ! In thee I live, and by thee I reign."—*Xiphilin*.



then returned along the coast to a neighbouring villa, in the vessel which had been fabricated for her destruction. The iniquitous scheme was not dexterously executed. The rowers who were privy to the plot endeavoured to sink the galley; but, being obstructed by those who were not in the secret, they could only make it slope, so as gently to throw out Agrippina, who swam until she was taken up by a party of boat-men. Her sagacity easily divined the treachery: but she sent a freedman to her son to inform him of her escape, as if her danger had merely arisen from accident. He seized the messenger, as one who had been commissioned to murder him; and consulted Burrhus and Seneca on his future proceedings. Both ministers, to their eternal disgrace, countenanced the scheme of matricide; and Anicetus was directed to carry it into immediate effect. Agrippina, surprised at the messenger's delay of return, remained in her chamber, anxious and uneasy. Her suspicions of another attempt against her life were confirmed by the appearance of Anicetus, who, with one of his officers and a centurion, entered the room. One of the ruffians struck her on the head with a club: the others pierced her with many wounds<sup>11</sup>.

Thus perished the daughter of Germanicus, by the base ingratitude and diabolical villany of that son for whom her influence had procured the most splendid sovereignty which those times could afford to an ambitious mind, and whose power, even if she had been inclined to overturn it, she could not shake. The tear of pity would fall over the recital of her catastrophe, if the recollection of her vices and crimes did not check it's flow.

The courtly sycophants, tutored by Nero, pretended that his mother, shocked at the detection of her treasonable schemes, had fallen by her own hands; and, while the public seemed to acquit him of real guilt, the senate

11 Tacit. lib. xiv. cap. 3—8. — Sueton. cap. 34. — Xiphil.

congratulated him, with servile baseness, on his escape from impending danger, stigmatised the birth-day of Agrippina as an inauspicious part of the calendar, and instituted annual games on the day of the alleged discovery of her flagitious conspiracy. These votes did not wholly remove the remorse which he felt in moments of solitude ; and he was, for some time, unwilling to return to Rome, from a doubt of the cordiality of his reception. In that respect, however, he was agreeably surprised ; for he was received with exterior joy, as a triumphant hero, or a gracious and patriotic prince. Yet the reflecting citizens, we may suppose, must have execrated his barbarity ; and they must, at the same time, have despised him for degrading himself (as he soon after did) into a public harper and singer. He had been accustomed to sing to the harp at his evening repast, in imitation (as he said) of ancient kings and generals : but, not content with this privacy of amusement, he at length began to sing at the theatre, and kept a band of young knights and plebeians in pay, to applaud his skill. He also affected the character of a charioteer, and was so fond of public diversions, that he instituted a quinquennial celebrity, at which chariot-races, gymnastic sports, musical performances and recitations, were destined to unite their attractions. At this exhibition, he received, from the judges of the contest, rewards for his skill in playing upon the harp, and for gratifying the people with the best oration and poem<sup>12</sup>.

A. D. 60.

While he was admired as a singer, player, and charioteer, he had no inclination to shine as a warrior ; yet his reign was signalised by some military exploits, which reflected great honor upon those generals whom he commissioned to maintain the dignity of Rome. Domitius Corbulo, having concerted with the governor of Syria the

12 Tacit. lib. xiv. cap. 12—15, 20.—Sueton. cap. 12.

means of making a powerful impression upon Armenia, prepared his soldiers by strict discipline for all the rigors of service, and then entered the contested kingdom. He was an officer of great courage and of some experience; he commanded respect by his portly figure and authoritative demeanor; and his boastful manner, and pomposity of speech and tone, did not diminish the impressiveness of his address. Advancing against Tiridates<sup>13</sup>, he endeavoured to draw him into a decisive action, but found him a rambling desultory warrior, and therefore divided his force, detaching troops to harass the enemy in various directions. The competition of Rhadamistus for the possession of the realm was terminated by his death. His own father cruelly sacrificed him at the shrine of Roman ambition, and encouraged a neighbouring community to attack Tiridates, who, thus endangered, proposed a negotiation with Corbulo. Suspecting treachery, the Roman general made such military dispositions as intimidated the adverse commander, who, declining a conference, hastily retired. The legionaries now formed various sieges, and, having taken three fortresses in one day, terrified other garrisons into a surrender. In that fortified town which Corbulo personally stormed, he put to the sword all the males who had reached the age of puberty, and condemned the unwarlike multitude to slavery. When he approached Artaxata, he was menaced by Tiridates, who yet did not dare to assault him. The inhabitants were so unwilling to risk the dangers of a siege, that they readily opened the gates; but their submission did not prevent the total destruction of the town, which Corbulo had not a sufficient force to garrison, while the efforts for the ruin of Tiridates required a considerable army. For this success, a thanksgiving was ordered by the senate, and new holidays were added to the calendar.<sup>14</sup>

13 In the year 58.

14 Tacit. lib. xiii.—Xiphil.



In another campaign, the Romans directed their early attention to Tigranocerta. In their march toward that strong town, they at first endeavoured to conciliate those Armenians who had not submitted : but, finding that many had retired into caves with their most valuable property, they blocked up the entrances with faggots, to which they set fire. Continuing their progress, they received a deputation from the threatened town, offering its surrender, with a wreath of gold for Corbulo. The citadel was occupied by a party of youthful combatants, who, when they had been repelled in a conflict which they risked before the walls, resolved to defend that fortress ; but, being fiercely attacked, they soon ceased to resist. Tiridates was now closely pursued, and driven from Armenia, of which, after cruel ravages, the invaders obtained full possession. The Parthians would have more powerfully assisted that prince, if they had not been involved in a war with the Hyrcanian revolters, who solicited the honor of Roman alliance, alleging that they had proved their regard for the emperor by detaining Vologeses in their country.

The prince whom Nero selected for the Armenian throne was Tigranes, a descendant of the Cappadocian kings. He had long resided at Rome as an hostage, and, having been treated like a slave, was expected to be an obsequious vassal. The new king having invaded and devastated Adiabene, the natives implored the aid of Vologeses, who, keenly resenting the exclusion of his brother from the Armenian realm, resolved A. D. 62. to make a vigorous attempt for his restoration. The Hyrcanians being in a great measure pacified, troops were sent against Tigranes ; and even Syria was menaced with an invasion. Corbulo had succeeded Vinidius as governor of that province ; and, as he thought that it's defence would require all his attention, he requested Nero to send another general into Armenia. Pætus, being sent to take

the command, commenced his operations with alacrity, while Corbulo diligently provided for the security of their most important posts near the Euphrates. Apprehending that an invasion of Syria would be too hazardous under the present circumstances, Vologeses entered Armenia with a great army, in the hope of crushing the king and his auxiliaries. Pætus affected a strong desire of meeting the Parthian monarch; but his attempts to oppose him were so feeble and ill-directed, that the enemy made a considerable progress in the reduction of forts. To save the endangered kingdom, he earnestly solicited assistance from Corbulo. Before the arrival of succours, the strength of his camp seemed insufficient to protect his legions; and he was urged by fear to sue for peace. In a conference, he consented to withdraw his army from Armenia. The troops were met by Corbulo, who lamented the disgrace of the Roman arms. The Parthians had insulted and plundered the legionaries, who, deserting their wounded comrades, fled rather than retreated. Vologeses was not encouraged by his success to hazard an engagement; nor did Corbulo think it prudent to force him to action. On the contrary, both entered into an agreement: the former promised to draw off all his garrisons from Armenia, and the latter declared that no part of the left bank of the Euphrates should be occupied by Roman troops<sup>15</sup>.

While Nero was ignorant of the retreat of Pætus and the real state of Armenia, some Parthian ambassadors arrived at Rome for the adjustment of all disputes.

A. D. 63. They boasted of the moderation of their sovereign, who, when he might have overwhelmed Pætus and his legions, permitted them to retire in safety; and they proposed that Tiridates should be re-admitted to the Armenian royalty, under the auspices of the Roman emperor. Having learned the actual result of the campaign,

Nero rejected the proposals of the envoys, and ordered Corbulo to restore his authority in Armenia by a new invasion. Tiridates desired a conference with that commander, with a view of averting the storm of hostility; and, in consequence of private instructions from Rome, it was agreed that the claimant should place the diadem before a statue of the emperor, and receive it as a gift<sup>16</sup>. This abandonment of Tigranes was not very honorable to Nero; but he was satisfied with the exterior acknowledgement of his paramount authority by the Parthian candidate.

During the war in Armenia, Suetonius Paulinus acquired a height of military reputation, not inferior to that of Corbulo. Being sent into Britain, he invaded Mona<sup>17</sup>, the chief seat of the Druids, whose exorbitant power he wished to annihilate, and whose terrific and inhuman superstition he hoped to abolish. Claudius had prohibited the continuance of their system in Gaul<sup>18</sup>; and, although it was perhaps to Nero a matter of indifference, whether it should subsist or be extinguished in Britain, his general seemed to think himself bound, both by policy and in conscience, to aim at its extirpation. When his troops had disembarked, they were at first confounded by the sight of a multitude of priests and women, who, mingled with the British warriors, roused them to a spirited resistance, by appealing to their piety and patriotism. The confusion of the Romans, however, soon subsided; and, rushing forward, they easily routed the defenders of the isle. Paulinus immediately ordered all the Druids to be thrown into the fires which they had prepared for the de-

16 Tiridates was afterward summoned to appear at Rome, where Nero, appearing in a triumphal habit, surrounded by troops and applauding citizens, graciously received the suppliant stranger, and ceremoniously placed a diadem upon his head, after he had declared himself the slave of the emperor, as ready to worship him as to adore Mithra.—*Xiphilin*.

17 The isle of Anglesey.

18 Sueton. Vit. Claudii, cap. 25.



struction of captives ; and, leaving a small force to garrison the most convenient posts, he hastened to suppress a revolt.

So tyrannically had the Romans acted in Britain, that the provincial islanders, ashamed of being passively subservient to their oppressors, and hoping by courage and concert to recover their independence, rose in arms<sup>19</sup>, while the governor was employed in the reduction of Mona. Bonduca, or Boadicea, who had been permitted by Roman favor to govern one of their states, took the field at the head of a very numerous army of revolters. At Verulam, London, and other towns, all who were of Roman origin, or attached to the tyrants of the province, were sacrificed to British vengeance, to the number of 70,000 persons. But Paulinus soon found an opportunity of retaliation. With a comparatively small force, advantageously stationed, he coolly sustained the furious assault of the confederate host ; and, when his men had boldly rushed out of the narrow space within which they were first drawn up, they fought with such vigor as ensured the triumph of their arms. In the battle and the pursuit, they are said to have slain eight times the number of their own army, not even sparing the females, who, placed in waggons, had attended their husbands, fathers, and brothers, into the field of slaughter. The princess who acted as commander of the insurgents, shocked at this disastrous defeat, took poison in despair ; and the insurrection, though not entirely or immediately quelled, ceased to be formidable or dangerous<sup>20</sup>.

Nero, in the mean time, prosecuted the career of tyranny, vice, and profligacy ; and, after the death of Burrhus, his misgovernment became more gross and flagrant. It was suspected that poison had been secretly given to that

19 In the year 61. 20 Tacit. lib. xlv.

minister ; and the suspicion is rendered probable by the known ingratitude and cruelty of the emperor<sup>21</sup>. Burrhus was not destitute of political or military talents : but he deserved severe censure for his concern in the elevation of Nero, whom, even before he had fully disclosed his vices, he knew to be dissolute and depraved. His præfecture was divided between Fenius Rufus,—whose character was that of a moderate, disinterested, and upright man,—and Tigellinus, who resembled his sovereign in manners and disposition. The interest of Seneca, which had been for some time declining, was nearly extinguished by the loss of his friend. He was accused by the courtiers of seeking only his own aggrandisement, of amassing wealth by every art, and of even endeavouring to rival the emperor in splendor of establishment, influence, and power. Nero pretended to vindicate and excuse the philosopher's conduct, and outwardly expressed his regard for him, while he no longer solicited his advice.

Tigellinus now exercised the chief power, and abused it to the purposes of injustice and murder. Finding that the influence of Rubellius Plautus and Sylla had excited the emperor's jealousy, he procured the assassination of both, when they were on their way to their respective governments. In stating these acts of violence to the senate, the tyrant falsely imputed seditious views to the two governors ; and the servile assembly ordered a thanksgiving for the preservation of the state from the attempts of such dangerous citizens. As even these murders were approved, he concluded that acts of minor guilt would be readily applauded ; and therefore, dismissing Octavia on pretence of her sterility, he married the infamous Poppea. When the people reprobated his conduct, he recalled his lawful wife. Flocking to the Capitol to thank

<sup>21</sup> Suetonius positively asserts, that, having promised Burrhus a remedy for a sore throat, he sent him a poisonous unguent. Tacitus merely says, that this was the general opinion.

the Gods for thus disposing his heart to repentance, the multitude threw down the statues of Poppæa, and replaced those of Octavia in the forum and the temples: but a body of soldiers soon dispersed the plebeians, and restored to the adulteress her unmerited honors. To blast the character of Octavia, with a view to her destruction, Anicetus was suborned to accuse her of having been criminally connected with him. On the foundation of this malignant falsehood, she was banished; and, as she did not die of grief, or destroy herself by violence, she was doomed to death by the murderous enemy of her father and her brother<sup>22</sup>. Her veins were opened; and, as her blood, checked by fear, did not flow freely, she was suffocated in a warm bath. She was a young woman of modesty and virtue; and her fate excited general compassion.

The birth of a daughter to the emperor, by his new wife, filled the court with joy. To the infant, as well as to it's mother, Nero gave the appellation of *Augusta*, the most dignified epithet that a female could receive. A temple was erected to Fecundity, the prolific Goddess, and games were celebrated on the joyful occasion. But the child did not live to complete the fourth month of it's age; and Poppæa did not gladden her husband with any other offspring.

The frivolous prince continued his theatrical pursuits with zeal: the imperial voluptuary prosecuted his brutal and unnatural lusts; and the assassin, with little intermission, shed the blood of his most respectable subjects. He even set fire to the metropolis of his empire, regardless of the loss of lives which an extensive conflagration would necessarily occasion. Being extravagantly fond of building, he seemed to wish for the honor of erecting a new city, in a style of uniform magnificence.

A. D. 64.



The fire commenced in the Circus, and, continuing for nine days<sup>23</sup>, spread over a large proportion of the city. Of its fourteen divisions, only four remained uninjured; three were entirely destroyed; and seven were left in a ruinous state. From the house of Mæcenæ the incendiary beheld the raging flames; and, comparing the prospect with the fire which had consumed Priam's far-famed city, he sang to the sounds of the harp, in a scenic habit, an ode commemorating the destruction of Troy<sup>24</sup>. Finding that he was accused of having ordered the conflagration, he asserted, with all the impudence of falsehood, that the Christians had fired the city; and, on this pretence, many of those followers of a pure religion were tortured and massacred: Many more were afterward put to death, by pagan barbarity, for having dared to renounce the established system of worship<sup>25</sup>.

For the purpose of rebuilding the city, the emperor levied contributions in all parts of the empire. A regular plan was drawn up; the streets were widened; the houses were not suffered to rise to so great a height as the former habitations; and a supply of water was provided against future fires. Some of the citizens objected to the new mode of building; alleging, that the wideness of the streets, unshaded from the sun, would expose the inhabitants to the unpleasing effects of the heat; but the generality were pleased at the free admission of air.

The continued tyranny and savage inhumanity of the despot at length produced (what might have A. D. 65. been much earlier expected) a plot for his destruction. This conspiracy was widely diffused among senators, knights, military officers, and plebeians. It is nominally attributed

<sup>23</sup> According to an inscription upon a stone found at Rome.

<sup>24</sup> Sueton. cap. 38.—Tacitus speaks of this wanton insult as a mere rumor; and he doubts whether the fire was the offspring of chance, or the result of Nero's villany. But the account given by Suetonius is corroborated, from Dio, by the narrative of Xiphilin; and it derives credibility from the atrocious character of the tyrant.

<sup>25</sup> Tacit. lib. xv.

to Caius Piso; but it is uncertain whether he or some other mal-content first framed or planned it. He was of a noble family, and had rendered himself popular by his affability, liberality, and that eloquence which he exercised in the defence of accused citizens. His most zealous and active associates were, Subrius Flavius, a prætorian tribune, and the centurion Sulpicius Asper. Plautius Lateranns, consul elect, the poet Lucan, Nero's intimate friend Senecio, the senators Sœvinus and Quinctianus, and many other persons not undistinguished, joined in the plot; and, when it had been for some time in agitation, even the præfect Rufus threw all his weight and influence into the scale. Seneca, disgusted at the vices and misgovernment of his pupil, also concurred with the conspirators, and gave the sanction of a philosopher to the scheme of tyrannicide<sup>26</sup>.

The plot was imprudently disclosed to many women; by one of whom (Epicharis) it was imparted to Proculus, a naval officer. He seemed ready to join in any enterprise against Nero, who had offended him by not rewarding, to the extent of his wish, his services against Agrippina: but, as soon as he had been informed of the conspiracy then depending, he communicated the intelligence to the emperor, who, sending for the female mal-content, endeavoured to learn the names of all her accomplices. She boldly denied the charge, and accused Proculus of having fabricated a gross falsehood. Nero suspected some mischief, and therefore detained her in custody, until he should be able either to substantiate or disprove the charge.

Far from being discouraged at this partial detection, the conspirators were only prompted by it to accelerate the grand experiment, whether the disgraceful yoke should be longer endured, or boldly shaken off. It was proposed, that the villa of Piso at Baïæ, to which Nero occasionally

<sup>26</sup> Tacit. lib. xv. cap. 48—50.—Xiphil.

resorted without a guard, should be the scene of action : but this hint was exploded by the chief conspirator, as involving odious treachery ; and a more public attack in the city, or in a palace which had been erected out of the spoils of the nation, was preferred. At the festival of Ceres, when the emperor was expected to appear at the sports of the Circus, it was resolved that he should be assaulted by Lateranus, who, falling at his feet in supplication, should suddenly draw him down by his superior strength, and firmly hold him, until others of the party should hasten to dispatch him. Scevinus took a dagger from a temple, and kept it as a sacred weapon, to strike the heart of an impious tyrant : but he did not so cautiously conceal his intention as to elude the suspicion of a freedman, who, in the expectation of a great reward, intimated to his sovereign the danger which hung over him. Scevinus, being consequently apprehended, and finding that Antonius Natalis, under the dread of torture, had made a confession, mentioned the names of several conspirators, who, being seised and interrogated, pointed out others. Epicharis, though cruelly tortured, refused to state any particulars ; and, when her tormentors were preparing to renew their brutality, she strangled herself with a fillet which she wore about her breast<sup>27</sup>.

Piso was advised by some of his friends to mount the rostrum, or appear in the camp, and court the favor of the people and the soldiery, that they might elevate him to the station which Nero so unworthily filled : but he was so discouraged at the failure of the conspiracy, that he retired to his house in despair ; and, on the approach of a party of soldiers, he opened the veins of his arms and bled to death. Lateranus was hurried to execution, without being permitted to take a melancholy farewell of his family. When an imperial agent came to decapitate him,

27 Tacit. lib. xv. cap. 52—57.



he preserved a dignified silence, without the least animadversion upon the treachery of the officer, who was one of his associates in the conspiracy.

The guilt of Seneca was not clearly proved or openly avowed; but Nero, who had endeavoured without effect to poison his tutor, was satisfied with the mere presumption of his concern in the plot; and, being informed that the philosopher had no intention of destroying himself, he sent a peremptory order for his death. Seneca, being thus excluded from all prospect of preservation, coolly prepared for the fate which was denounced against him. To his wife Paulina he imparted salutary consolation; but she declared that she would not survive him, and called for the minister of death. "As you are thus determined upon the surrender of your life (said her husband), let us both give to the world an example of fortitude, while your self-sacrifice will entitle you to a greater share of fame than I have a right to expect." Both then opened their veins, Seneca in his arms and legs, his wife in her arms only. That she might not witness his torture, he persuaded her to retire into another apartment; and a message was soon after sent by Nero, intimating that her death would displease him. Bandages were instantly applied to her arms; and she lived some years afterward, exhibiting an extraordinary paleness of aspect. Seneca, to hasten his dissolution, drank an infusion of hemlock; but, as it had no effect upon his chilled and enfeebled frame, he was placed at his own request in a hot bath, and soon expired<sup>28</sup>.

Seneca was both an intelligent statesman and an enlightened philosopher: but he did not practically regard his own maxims, or the rules of conduct which he recommended to others. He resembled some modern divines, who can give the best advice from the pulpit, but do not

seem to think that their own conduct ought to be regulated by the same standard.

Lucan had no reason to expect mercy from a prince whom he had keenly satirised, and who, being himself a versifier, was jealous of the superior fame of the Pharsalian poet. Yet he tried the effect of abject supplication, and courted favor by a full confession. He was even so base and depraved, as to name his innocent mother among the accomplices of Piso. Being indulged with the choice of a particular mode of death, he sent a note to his father, suggesting corrections for a poem which he had formerly written, and feasted freely, before he gave up his person to the torture of venesection<sup>29</sup>. He died like a poet; for he recited some of his verses with an animated tone, before the gradual loss of blood had affected his speech.

In the examination of the conspirators, Rufus had assisted the emperor and Tigellinus, and seemed to think that his affected zeal for justice would preclude a suspicion of his guilt. Flavius, being present at an inquiry, was preparing to draw his sword against the tyrant; but he was checked in his movements by the præfect, who soon had cause to lament his repression of the tribune's violence; for he was himself accused by Scevinus of an intimate knowledge of the plot, and consigned to death as a traitor. Flavius was also betrayed by one of his accomplices; and, being asked by Nero why he had violated his oath of allegiance, he answered, "While you acted like a good prince, none of your subjects had a greater regard for you than I had; but I began to despise you when you appeared as a charioteer and a harper, and to hate you when you became an assassin and an incendiary." The force of this reply was keenly felt by the emperor, who, without proceeding in his examination of the tribune, ordered him to be instantly decapitated. Asper

<sup>29</sup> Lucani Vit. apud Sueton.

reproached Nero with equal freedom, and suffered death with equal fortitude. Many other citizens, charged with the same offence, were dismissed from the world ; while some, who were merely suspected of disaffection, were banished.

The malignant despot wished, that the consul Vestinus had been implicated in the conspiracy : but, as no one dared to accuse him either of such delinquency, or of any other crime or misdemeanor, an officer was sent with a party of soldiers to enforce his death, by an arbitrary and wanton exercise of power. The leader of the party probably said, “ You are not condemned as a criminal, or “ punished as a violator of the laws ; but your sovereign “ commands that you should die.” The unfortunate magistrate was seized, and bled to death in a bath. He had formerly been a confidential companion of Nero, who thought himself, however, despised by Vestinus, and did not forget some smart railery in which his friend had occasionally indulged himself <sup>30</sup>.

Sacrifices and thanks-givings outwardly enlivened the city, when the emperor had thus frustrated the alarming machinations of his enemies. When he appeared in public, he was congratulated with seeming cordiality, and received with loud acclamations, as if he had been the most estimable of princes. Yet many of the citizens ventured to hint that the alleged conspiracy was a fabrication, calculated to furnish a pretence for a multiplicity of murders. To obviate rumors of this kind, Nero communicated to the senate the particulars of the discovery, and the confessions of the criminals ; and that a plot was really formed against him, there is no reason to doubt.

As soon as the alarm had subsided, the emperor resumed his amusements with redoubled eagerness. Amidst his diversions and debaucheries, his desire of a new fund



for prodigality was stimulated by a report of the discovery of an immense quantity of gold in a cave belonging to Bassus, an African subject of Rome. Without reflecting on the risque of deception, as Bassus was influenced in his belief by an idle dream, Nero sent agents to secure the whole or the greater part of the treasure for himself: but, after a long search, nothing valuable was found. The African, not expecting mercy for having deluded his sovereign, put an end to his own life.

The quinquennial festival now recurred; but Nero's impatience would not suffer him to wait for the stated day. To flatter his vanity, the senate previously offered him the crown of eloquence, and the prize due to the best singer: but he replied, that the honor was premature, and that the impartial opinion of the regular judges of excellence must determine the validity of his pretensions. Being requested by the populace to exert the powers of his heavenly voice, he promised to sing and play in his garden; but, at the desire of his guard, he transferred his disgraceful exposure to the theatre, and ordered his name to be inserted in the ordinary list of musical professors. As soon as he had finished his performance, he bent his knee, and, with an affectation of modest timidity and anxiety, awaited that decision which he knew would be favorable. As spies were employed to make a report of the particular impression which his skill made upon the auditors and spectators, the generality pretended to be pleased; while some, who forbore to applaud, or who had the courage or the imprudence to manifest their disgust, were punished as disaffected persons<sup>31</sup>.

The close of the celebrity was marked by an act of violence, which, without bearing the odious form of deliberate murder, was at least precipitate and highly unjustifiable. Returning from a chariot-race, the emperor

31 Tacit. lib. xvi. cap. 4, 5.—Sueton.—cap. 21, 23.

was reprimanded by his wife for his protracted absence ; and her freedom so wounded his pride, that he gave her a furious kick, which was rendered fatal by her advanced state of pregnancy. He honored her with a public funeral, and praised her exterior attractions, if not her virtues, in a formal oration. When he felt an inclination to supply this domestic vacancy, he addressed Antonia, the daughter of Claudius : and, when her detestation of his character prompted her to reject the offer of his blood-stained hand, he put her to death, on a charge of sedition<sup>32</sup>.

Other acts of injustice and outrage continued to disgrace his government. Imputing views of traitorous ambition to Caius Cassius and Silanus, he desired the senate to pronounce a sentence of exile against them. Both were innocent of the charge ; but, as Cassius was so brutally inhuman, that, when a slave had killed his master, he procured a decree (on pretence of an ancient custom) for the massacre of a number of innoxious slaves, because they belonged to the family of the murdered citizen, there were few who would have lamented his fate, if his death had been ordered by the jealous emperor. Silanus, being sent into Apulia, was soon after murdered by a centurion, whom Nero had ordered to intrude into his place of retreat<sup>33</sup>.

The fate of Antistius Vetus, a man of high distinction, and of his mother-in-law and daughter, excited peculiar commiseration. A freed-man was suborned to accuse him of criminal or sinister intentions ; and a party of soldiers surrounded his villa to prevent his escape. His daughter, who, since the murder of her husband Plautus, had yielded to an excess of grief, repaired to Naples to request an audience of the emperor ; and, when he refused to admit her into his apartment, she watched his egress from the mansion, poured her complaints into his ear, and asserted the inno-

<sup>32</sup> Sueton. cap. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Tacit. lib. xiv. cap. 45 ; xvi. 9.

cence and loyalty of Vetus. Finding him inflexible, and being assured that a sentence of condemnation would be immediately obtained from the servile senate, she warned her father of his danger. The three friends had recourse to venesection, and calmly died, viewing each other to the last moment with eyes of fond affection.

To the deaths occasioned by the cruelty of Nero, melancholy additions were made by a pestilence which broke out in the ensuing autumn, and which, it is said, carried off about 30,000 persons<sup>34</sup>. No observable intemperature of the air preceded this dreadful calamity; and it was therefore ascribed to the displeasure with which the Gods viewed the wickedness of the prince, or the sins and vices of the people.

The following year exhibited a new succession of murders; so insatiable was the cruelty of the ruling monster. A. D. 66. Ostorius, the conqueror of Caractacus, was sacrificed to Nero's visionary fears. Mela, who was the brother of Seneca and father of Lucan, was put to death, chiefly because his wealth was attractive and desirable. Petronius, having roused the envy of Tigellinus by the reputed superiority of his voluptuary taste and refinement, was driven to suicide<sup>35</sup>.

Among other victims, we find the illustrious names of Thræsea and Soranus. The former of these senators had occasionally left the assembly, when the majority of the members were evincing all the meanness of pusillanimous subserviency: he had also offended Nero by withholding applause from his public performances, and by not offering incense to his sacred voice; and his integrity and virtue disgusted the court by forming a contrast to the

<sup>34</sup> Sueton. cap. 39.

<sup>35</sup> It is generally supposed, that this unfortunate citizen was the elegant but impure poet, of whose productions we have some remains: but the alleged identity is doubted by Lipsius and some other critics, and has not been fully demonstrated.



baseness and villany of the prince. Being accused of propagating disaffection, and of aiming at the subversion of the established government, he asked the advice of his friends, whether it would be expedient to vindicate himself, or decline a defence which, he might easily foresee, would be fruitless. Opposite sentiments being delivered, he remained in a state of indecision. In the mean time, the senate-house was surrounded by armed men; and the dread of violence produced such votes as the emperor desired. Thræsea being condemned as a disaffected citizen, the choice of his death was graciously left to his determination. Against Soranus, who was accused of having courted popularity in his Asiatic government with traitorous views, a sentence equally unjust was pronounced; and the same insult was added to the iniquitous vote. His daughter Servilia was also an object of malignant accusation. The weakness of superstition, influenced by filial regard, had prompted this young lady to consult the professors of magic and divination, on the subject of her father's fate, and the probable effect of Nero's displeasure. When she was interrogated by the courtly senators, she acknowledged that she had given her best apparel and jewels to the soothsayers, in the hope of securing the favor of the Gods to her beloved parent. This artless reply had no favorable effect. Her husband had been recently banished; but her fate was more severe; for she was doomed to death. The three innocent victims opened their veins; and their misfortunes excited general compassion; but the terrors of despotic power smothered the rising indignation<sup>36</sup>.

To gratify his love of amusement, and also to indulge his cruelty and rapacity in a varied and extended course, Nero now resolved upon a journey into Greece. He was attended by a crowd of courtiers, theatrical and musical

performers, dancers, charioteers, and all the ministers of pleasure and diversion. For his exposure of his vanity and folly in the Grecian towns, he received, without the claims of desert, a multiplicity of honorary crowns, which he preserved as the most valuable testimonials of ability and merit. In return for this flattering reception, he restored Greece to the dignity and comforts of freedom; but he diminished the favor, while he remained in that country, by numerous acts of injustice: He plundered the temples, seized in many instances the property of the rich, and murdered a considerable number of the defenceless provincials<sup>37</sup>. Yet he was desirous of performing one work worthy of a prince; for he employed a multitude of provincials, criminals, and captives, in an attempt to cut through the isthmus of Corinth; but he found this work too difficult to be accomplished; and it was discontinued after the laborers had reluctantly prosecuted their task for the space of four furlongs<sup>38</sup>. As the experiment had been repeatedly made without success, the renewal of such an attempt was thought ominous by the superstition of the ancients.

His attention to public works did not divert his attention from acts of violence, or allay his thirst of blood. He sent orders for the appearance of A. D. 67. many distinguished persons in Greece; and, as soon as they arrived, they either destroyed themselves, or were put to death by his command<sup>39</sup>. Corbulo was one of these victims, against whom no charge could be adduced, unless an acquiescence in his tyranny was a crime.

While Nero was thus employed, he was alarmed at the intelligence which he received from Judæa. Claudius, on the death of his friend Agrippa, had reduced that country to a provincial state; and Nero, finding the go-

<sup>37</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

<sup>38</sup> Philostrat. Vit. Apollonii Tyanæi.—Sueton.

<sup>39</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

vernment in the hands of Felix, had confirmed the authority of that officer, who, to preserve peace and order, found constant exertions requisite, and yet could not suppress every insurrection, quell every tumult, extirpate or reclaim every gang of ruffians. Albinus, the next governor, was more attentive to the accumulation of treasure, than to the performance of the duties of his high office: and Florus, who succeeded him, added to other iniquities the most execrable inhumanity. He emulated the tyranny of his imperial master; and, when the Jews began to complain loudly of his oppressions, and applied for redress to Gallus, præfect of Syria, he continued his misgovernment with the most determined pertinacity, in the hope of driving them into an insurrection; the confusions of which, he thought, would give him an opportunity of escaping an impeachment. So unwilling, at first, were the people to rise against the government, that even the massacre of 630 persons at Jerusalem by the soldiery, without any other provocation than the clamors of a few, did not inflame them into resistance: but, in a subsequent scene of military outrage, their patience so far gave way to a spirit of self-defence, that they annoyed their oppressors with missiles from the roofs of houses, and compelled Florus to retreat to the palace. Retiring to Cæsarea, he sent to Gallus a formal accusation, imputing to the Jews the most seditious and treasonable intentions. The principal inhabitants of the city, on the other hand, concurred with Berenice, the widow of Herod king of Chalcis, in an exposure of the mal-administration and atrocities of Florus. Gallus sent an officer to investigate the truth; and his report was favorable to the Jews, who, thus encouraged, resolved to state their grievances to the imperial court. The younger Agrippa dissuaded them from this step, and recommended a quiet submission to Florus; and the higher class of citizens agreed to this proposition: but, among the inferior inhabitants, resent-



ment against their tyrant had risen to such a height, that they refused to listen to moderate counsels. Troops being sent by Agrippa, from Batanea and other territories under his sway, to check that effervescence which menaced the Romans with a revolt, sanguinary commotions arose, in which both parties suffered considerable loss. The insurgents had the advantage, and besieged the Romans and their associates in the three forts built by Herod the Great. From these stations the garrisons at length consented to retire, upon a promise of safety ; but the revolvers, headed by Eleazar, attacked them as soon as they had resigned their arms, and slew all except the commandant, who redeemed his life by submitting to circumcision. Florus was then at Cæsarea, where the obnoxious Jews were murdered in multitudes<sup>40</sup>. Enraged at the massacre of their brethren, the Israelites over-ran various parts of Syria, and ravaged the country with fire and sword ; but the Syrians, by whom they were hated, made fierce reprisals. Gallus now led an army into Judæa ; and, after several conflicts, in one of which he was nearly defeated, he invested the holy city. Discouraged by the ill success of his assaults, he soon raised the siege, and was so harassed in his retreat, that he did not escape without severe loss. The insurgents immediately proceeded to a reform of the government ; and Joseph, the son of Gorion, being joined with the high priest in the chief authority, made prudent arrangements both of policy and war. To defend the city and the country with effect against the Romans, the greatest exertions, the most studious vigilance and attention, were requisite : yet the Jewish leaders did not despair of success. The emperor, though not so regardful of distant dependencies as his predecessors were, could not conceal, even under an affectation of indifference, the uneasiness which he felt

<sup>40</sup> To the amount (says Josephus) of 20,000.

when the revolt was announced. He was apprehensive of the extension of a similar spirit over Syria and Asia Minor; and, therefore, resolved to supersede Florus and Gallus by a more judicious choice of governors. In consequence of the new appointments, a change soon occurred in the state of affairs; but the Jews were not fully subdued without the labor of four campaigns<sup>41</sup>.

When Nero had glaringly manifested his folly, profligacy, and cruelty, in Greece, he commenced his return

A. D. 67. to the westward, that he might blast, by his baleful presence, the comforts of his Italian subjects.

Their state had not been very desirable in his absence; for his freed-man Helius had tyrannised over them with the most unfeeling brutality. This minister was so highly favored, as to be indulged with the power of confiscation, banishment, or death, without distinction of ranks, without proof of guilt, and without consulting his patron<sup>42</sup>. An enormous excess of power, too great to be intrusted even to the best of men, was in this instance given to one of the worst; and he exercised it with that inhuman rigor which was calculated to please his arbitrary master. It is difficult to determine which was the greater villain or more flagitious oppressor, the minister or his sovereign.

Returning to Naples, where he had first publicly displayed his vocal and histrionic talents, the vain-glorious despot passed, in a chariot drawn by white horses, through a breach which he had ordered to be made in the wall, according to the custom of the fortunate contenders in the Grecian games. He entered Rome in the same car in which Augustus had formerly triumphed; arrayed in a purple vest, and a robe spangled with golden stars; bearing on his head the Olympic wreath, and in his hand the Pythian meed of success; and followed by an applauding throng of those who had witnessed his various exhibi-

41 Joseph. de Bellis Jud. lib. ii. cap. 10 et seq.

42 Xiphil. Hist.

bitions and performances, and who called themselves the soldiers of his triumph. In his progress he received the honors of sacrifice, and appeared as the idol of a degraded people<sup>43</sup>.

Notwithstanding the general submission which prevailed, the tyranny of Helius had produced such discontent, that a revolt was apprehended by the favorite, who had therefore hastened, by a sudden voyage to Greece, the return of his master. New cruelties followed the emperor's arrival in Italy. Many of his attendants were put to death, soon after his disembarkation, for having seemingly rejoiced at his danger, when a storm threatened him with destruction. Others suffered the same fate at Rome upon various pretences; and he seemed to think, if we may judge of his thoughts from his habitual conduct, that the mere possession of power licensed him to perpetrate every enormity. Too long was he suffered to entertain this extravagant fancy, and to revel in the hope of protracted sway. The very names of prince and emperor seemed to reconcile the people even to the most horrible tyranny.

When he had exhibited, on his re-appearance in Italy, the absurd parade of an Olympic victor, rather than the imposing majesty of the sovereign of a great empire, he passed the rest of the year chiefly in amusements, neglecting his imperial duties, but not sparing his innocent subjects. Another conspiracy, breaking out amidst the horror which his cruelties excited, gave him a temporary alarm. It was organised by Vinicius at Beneventum, but was soon detected and baffled<sup>44</sup>.

The decline of Roman spirit was strikingly manifested in the long submission of the senate and people to the sway of so detestable a prince. Instead of acting as the protector of his subjects and the friend of mankind, he raged against all ranks with remorseless cruelty, and gave a loose to the most

43 Sueton. cap. 25.—Xiphil.

44 Sueton. cap. 26.



unbridled spirit of nefarious tyranny. He discarded all sense of honor, rectitude, justice, or humanity, and violated all laws divine and human. I am not an advocate for resistance to the ruling power, as the frequency of such practice may even be more mischievous than systematic tyranny: but, when a wild beast rages in the form of a prince, he ought to be hunted down as the enemy of his species. It is not only a *disgrace* to endure the yoke of such a sovereign, but there is no *security* in submission. Where no person's life is safe, the dictates of self-preservation call for vigorous exertion. Against a lawless despot or a public enemy, a nation may rise without the guilt of treason; and his punishment is less an act of vengeance than of justice.

Many of those who had groaned under a protracted series of tyranny, at length resolved to seek redress in action, as they knew that advice and remonstrance would be fruitless: but the insurrective movements did not constitute that well-concerted combination which holds out a prospect of political reform, or of a beneficial change of system. The insurgents aimed at the removal of an odious tyrant; but despotism was still to be the chief feature of the government.

The first symptoms of serious discontent appeared in Gaul, where Julius Vindex acted as proprætor. A. D. 68. By him the legions and the people were taught to call for a new emperor, as their present sovereign disgraced not only his high station, but human nature itself. Vindex did not aspire to the throne, but wished that it might be filled by Sulpicius Galba, whom he exhorted, by a friendly epistle, to assert the rights of mankind. Galba did not long hesitate, being impelled both by the hope of power, and by the necessity of self-defence; for he found that Nero had sent, to the provincial procurators, a mandate for his destruction. In a public harangue, he deplored the miseries of the times, announced his determi-

nation of attempting to rescue the subjects of the empire from the most oppressive tyranny, and, being proclaimed emperor by the troops, declared himself the lieutenant and defender of the senate and people of Rome. He made great additions to his military force, and prepared to act with that vigor which the critical occasion urgently required<sup>45</sup>.

At the first rumor of the Gallic insurrection, the emperor seemed to rejoice, as it would afford him a pretence for plundering an opulent province. Even after the frequent arrival of alarming intelligence, he did not appear to be aware of his danger, but remained for eight days in a state of inaction, without giving any instructions for quelling the revolt. In perusing the manifestoes of Vindex; he was more displeased at being ridiculed as an unskilful harper, than offended at being reviled as an inhuman tyrant. At length the report of Galba's movements threw him into a fit of despair. He beat his head, tore his robe, and exclaimed that he was ruined: yet he did not neglect his dissolute amusements or his luxurious indulgences. When he thought it necessary to prepare for war, he resolved to take his concubines with him, armed like Amazons. When he had, not without great difficulty, collected men and money, he delayed his march, and wasted that time which a courageous despot would have employed in action<sup>46</sup>.

Virginius Rufus, who exercised provincial command on the borders of Germany, marched to Vesontio, with the apparent intention of opposing Vindex: but the two commanders soon came to a good understanding. The troops of Rufus, however, without regarding the supposed agreement, attacked and routed those of Vindex, who immediately slew himself<sup>47</sup>. Galba, doubtful of the issue of his revolt, was on the point of treating himself in the same

<sup>45</sup> Sueton. Vit. Galbæ, cap. 9, 10.—Xiphil.

<sup>46</sup> Sueton. Vit. Neronis, cap. 40—44.

<sup>47</sup> Plut. Vit. Galbæ.—Xiphil.

manner; but subsequent intelligence of the most agreeable nature restored his courage, and re-animated his hopes.

Nero, in the height of desperate phrensy, thought of murdering the senators, burning the city, and retiring to Alexandria, where he might in privacy indulge his musical propensities: but he had neither the power of executing any hostile purposes against the Romans, nor the means of securing his own escape. Deserted by his reputed friends and his guard, he fled to a cave, with Sporus and three other companions. Being informed that the senate had declared him a public enemy, and ordered diligent search to be made for him, with a view of punishing him in the ancient mode, by scourging him to death, he seised a dagger, and, alarmed at the approach of horsemen, stabbed himself, but with so feeble a hand, that his secretary was obliged to impart that vigor which rendered the wound mortal<sup>48</sup>. Thus perished an execrable tyrant, who ought never to have been invested with sovereignty or power.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the character of this prince. He seemed to exhibit some rays of intellect, and some good qualities, at the commencement of his reign; but the possession of despotic power corrupted his heart; and he became one of the most flagitious monsters that ever oppressed the human race. His lascivious brutality must excite strong disgust; and the detail of his atrocious cruelties cannot be read without emotions of horror and detestation.

<sup>48</sup> Sueton. Vit. Neronis, cap. 49.—Xiphil.



## LETTER IX.

*History of the Reigns of GALBA, OTHO, and VITELLIUS.*

A GENERAL assent to the elevation of Galba immediately followed the death of Nero. The senate and people acknowledged him as emperor; but the prætorian troops were so disgusted at his refusal of granting a donative which had been promised in his name, that they were inclined to support their præfect Nymphidius in the assumption of the supreme power. The sway of this usurper, however, was very transitory; for Antonius Honoratus, one of the officers, instigated many of the soldiers to murder him; and some of his chief partisans were put to death by order of Galba, who also employed his emissaries in the assassination of Nero's friend Petronius Turpilianus, and of Fonteius Capito and Clodius Macer, commanders in Germany and in Africa.

Other acts of cruelty stained the incipient reign. Several officers of the government, in Gaul and Spain, were murdered with their families, because they were not so ready, as the generality of the provincials had been, to concur in the revolt; and, when Galba approached Rome, being met by a body of mariners and boat-men whom Nero had enrolled among the legionaries, and who refused to return (as the new emperor desired them) to their former station, he ordered his cavalry to attack them, and massacred every tenth man of those who were not slain in the assault<sup>1</sup>.

By this conduct, by various instances of misgovernment, and by suffering himself to be ruled by three of the most unprincipled men in the empire (the consul Vinus, Laco, and Icelus), he excited great and general odium.

<sup>1</sup> Sueton. Vit. Galbæ, cap. 12.—Tacit. Hist. lib. i.—Plut.

He had evinced his gratitude to the Gauls by lightening the burthen of their imposts, and by granting to them the freedom of Rome; but, by excepting from these favors the municipalities that bordered on Germany, he gave high offence to a number of provincials, whose discontent extended itself over the Rhine. The legions in Germany, exclaiming against his cruelty and avarice, called for a new master<sup>2</sup>. For a remark which he repeatedly threw out, the military part of the nation could not forgive him. It was his custom, he said, to choose soldiers, not to buy them.

When he was apprised of the disaffection of the Germanic legions, he endeavoured, by the adoption  
A. D. 69. of a successor, to prop his despised age, and strengthen his declining influence. He fixed his choice upon Piso Licinianus, a young man of an exalted family and a respectable character, whom tyranny had subjected to a long exile; but the annunciation of this appointment to the soldiers, not being accompanied with a donative, gave no satisfaction. The senate received the intimation with less indifference, and resolved to send deputies, in the hope of reclaiming the mal-content legionaries. Otho, a dissolute friend of Nero, who had transferred his interest to Galba, had expected from him the honor of adoption; and his disappointment urged him to erect the standard of revolt<sup>3</sup>.

To meet the rising storm with the sinews of war, Galba recruited the treasury, by insisting upon a restitution of nine-tenths of the money lavished by his predecessor upon the worthless ministers of dissipation and debauchery; but this resumption was necessarily very imperfect, because the greater part of the donations had been idly

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch says, that they claimed a recompence for having defeated Vindex; but could they suppose that Galba would reward them for a battle, wantonly fought, against one who was his friend, not his competitor?

<sup>3</sup> Tacit. Hist. lib. i.—Sueton. Vit. Galbæ et Othonis.

squandered. This act of power gave great joy to many, who expressed their pleasure at finding the objects of Nero's inconsiderate liberality equally poor with those citizens who had suffered by his rapacity. To secure the fidelity of the troops that were at Rome, some suspected officers were dismissed from the service, and their places were filled with men who were supposed to be attached to the reigning prince: but disaffection prevailed to such an extent, that this change was far from being efficacious.

The friends and emissaries of Otho, by plausible professions and acts of liberality, found little difficulty in forming a strong party among the soldiers; and it was resolved, that both Galba and Piso should be assassinated without delay. To elude suspicion, Otho attended a sacrifice at which the emperor presided, and saluted him with an air of friendship. He then pretended that other business called him away, and hastened to a spot where twenty-three of his partisans waited to hail him as their sovereign. The number increased as he proceeded to the field of Mars; and he was received in the camp with respect and submission<sup>4</sup>.

Galba was still sacrificing, with ominous appearances in the victims, when the news of the insurrection arrived. He received the intelligence without dismay, while confusion pervaded the city. As he was anxiously collecting troops, one of his guards ran toward him, boasting that he had killed Otho. "Fellow-soldier (said the emperor coolly), who ordered you so to act?" The false assertion was calculated only to draw him to the camp. As he advanced, the clamors of insurrection swelled to an alarming tumult. Otho moved forward to meet him, receiving and returning the salutations of the people. Having drawn into his service the legion formed from the mariners, he harangued his whole army, arraigned the cruelty of Galba

<sup>4</sup> Plut. Vit. Galbæ.—Tacit.—Sueton.



and the gloomy severity of Piso, and exposed the iniquitous practices of the arbitrary and rapacious triumvirate. He then sent a party of horsemen to attack the emperor, who, being deserted by all except a faithful centurion, was thrown out of his elevated chair, and pierced with repeated wounds. Vinius was also put to death; and Piso, trusting in vain to the sanctity of a temple, was murdered as the rival of Otho, who viewed his bleeding head with savage joy<sup>5</sup>.

Galba, before he seized the imperial dignity, had acquired the reputation of an upright and wise provincial governor, and an able warrior; but his virtues were specious rather than solid; and the possession of high power seemed to evince his incapacity. Whatever his former government might have been, his imperial sway was capriciously tyrannical, without rule or system, without dignity or wisdom. With all his ostensible regard for justice, he was guilty of gross iniquity. He was, on many occasions, extremely cruel; and, with all his gravity and supposed temperance, he cherished, even at an advanced age, the most unnatural propensities. Many (says his Grecian biographer) lamented his death; but he left none who wished to retain him for a sovereign.

The senate being convoked by the prætor, Otho was invested with the imperial dignity, of which no man of sense or honor thought him worthy. He pleased the people by issuing an order for the death of Tigellinus, the most odious of Nero's favorites, whom Galba, while he put innocent men to death, had saved from the punishment which he deserved. He was also praised for restoring, to the senators whom the same tyrant had banished, and who had been lately recalled, such of their property as remained unsold. But his general government was not that of a good or just prince.

<sup>5</sup> Tacit. lib. i.—Xiphil.—Plut.

The usurper's popular acts arose from his fear of a bold competitor, rather than from a sense of propriety or of rectitude. Aulus Vitellius, a creature of Tiberius, and a friend of the succeeding emperors, had been lately commissioned to act as governor of the provincial territories in Lower Germany; and, having studiously encouraged the legionaries in their disaffection to Galba, he was invited (about the time of Otho's insurrection) to assume that dignity which he eagerly desired. In Upper Germany, the troops had previously renounced the authority of Galba, and had sworn fidelity to the senate: but, as this, from the degraded state of that assembly, was deemed an unmeaning and nugatory oath, they offered their service to Vitellius. His most zealous associates were Fabius Valens and Cæcina, whom he sent with divided armies into Italy. The former, in his way through the eastern parts of Gaul, harassed the provincials by rapine and cruelty; and the latter had a fierce conflict with the Helvetii, whose resentment he roused by depredation. With the aid of troops sent to him from Rhætia, he slew many thousands of his adversaries, and consigned a great number to servitude.

Unwilling to encounter the hostility of Vitellius, Otho offered him an ample income and a peaceful asylum, where-ever he might choose to fix himself<sup>6</sup>: but this overture was derided as insincere, or rejected as inadequate to reasonable expectations. Each sent assassins, without effect, to murder his rival. Both had a great mass of military strength; but Otho's authority was more prevalent and extensive; and a victory over a foreign enemy imparted splendor to his administration. An equestrian army of Sarmatians having invaded the Mœsian province, a legion under Aponius attacked the marauders, and slew almost the whole number.

<sup>6</sup> Tacit. lib. i.—Suetonius and Dio say, that he offered him a participation of the sovereignty.

Advancing to the northward, Otho hoped to prevent Valens and Cæcina from crossing the Alps; and, as he particularly wished to dispossess his enemies of the southern part of Gaul, he detached three of his officers, with a considerable army, to the Maritime Alps, while a fleet proceeded along the coast. An engagement ensued near the sea-side, to the advantage of the Othonian cause; and another conflict soon followed, in which the interest of the reigning prince also prevailed. Cæcina, however, was not prevented from reaching the banks of the Po. He invested Placentia, and assaulted with great fury the works which Spurrinna had raised about the town; but he met with a sanguinary repulse. Accompanied and encouraged by his wife, he renewed his efforts, which were again baffled. Retiring toward Cremona, and hearing of the approach of Annius, whom Spurrinna had called to his aid, he disposed a considerable body of infantry in groves near the high road, and sent out his cavalry to provoke a battle, and draw the Othonians by a pretended flight to the place of ambuscade. Some of his men betrayed his intentions to Suetonius Paulinus, who, in concert with Marius Celsus, took measures for the frustration of the scheme. The Vitellian horse, after retreating in an affected panic, turned upon the emperor's receding troops, and were hurried by blind confidence to a spot where they were nearly surrounded. Cæcina was now obliged to send his infantry from the ambush for the rescue of the endangered cavalry: but, notwithstanding all his exertions, his army might have been ruined, if Paulinus had properly supported the division which Celsus commanded: but he seemed to dread the desperation of the adverse party, and gave the signal for a retreat<sup>7</sup>.

When the troops under Valens were informed of this misfortune, they severely blamed their general for his de-

<sup>7</sup> Plut. Vit. Othonis.—Tacit. lib. ii.



lay, and hastened, without waiting for his orders, to join the re-assembled remains of the defeated army. Both commanders then resolved to risque a general engagement. Policy might have induced the Othonians to postpone the ultimate decision, because they expected a great accession of force, and were well supplied with provisions, while Vitellius had at present all the troops that his influence could assemble, and found great difficulty in procuring for them the means of subsistence. These grounds of delay, which Paulinus enforced in a council of war, were supported by the advice of Celsus and Annius; but the præfect Proculus, and the emperor's brother Titianus, recommended an immediate trial of fortune, alleging, that the Gods apparently favored the cause of Otho, and that the troops, particularly the prætorian battalions, were uncommonly eager to decide the contest.

It would seem astonishing, that such a number of citizens should be ready to risque their lives for two rivals of depraved and profligate characters, if we did not meet with frequent instances of the same extravagant folly and insane absurdity. Both competitors deserved disgrace and exemplary punishment, instead of attachment and support: yet both were able to assemble a multitude of devoted victims, as if wounds and death in the cause of either were honorable and glorious<sup>8</sup>.

Otho, notwithstanding his effeminacy, was willing to assume the command in the decisive conflict: but, being dissuaded by his brother and Proculus from the exposure of his person, he waited the event on the southern side of the Po, while many of the soldiers in vain demanded his presence. The departure of his best troops from the

<sup>8</sup> Tacitus and Plutarch refer to a written account, stating that the two armies were inclined to meet and choose an emperor, or leave the appointment to the senate, rather than fight for Otho or Vitellius; but, if they were so disposed, their commanders again hurried them into hostile sentiments. The Roman writer rejects the statement as an idle rumor, not believing that such prudence and moderation could actuate the military rabble.

field, to attend their prince, tended to discourage the rest: yet, when orders were given for battle, they marched forward with seeming alacrity. While Titianus had the ostensible command, Proculus directed the movements and the operations, neglecting the advice of Paulinus and Celsus, whose superior skill and knowledge would have corrected his incompetency. When the engagement was on the point of commencing, a report of the intended desertion of the troops of Vitellius arose. By whom it was broached no one knew; but it was probably invented by one of his partisans, in the hope of relaxing the firmness of the Othonians. It had in some measure that effect; for the van-guard of the latter addressed the Vitellians in a friendly manner, so as to excite in the following ranks a suspicion of treachery. The salutations were received with murmurs of disgust, and answered with denunciations of hostility.

The place of collision was so intersected with holes and ditches, and so encumbered with trees and vine-plantations, that irregularity and disorder necessarily prevailed. Two legions, however, found an open field, as commodious as could be wished for the work of slaughter. One was a veteran body, the other a new *corps*. The inexperienced Othonians made a strong impression upon the foremost ranks of the old legion, and seized the eagle; but the Vitellians chastised their presumption by a vigorous and effectual assault. After some desultory conflicts in other parts, the emperor's troops, being less orderly than their opponents, less numerous, and at the same time fatigued with their march, were obliged to give way. Great confusion and carnage ensued<sup>9</sup>: yet a considerable body of fugitives reached Bedriacum; and, as reinforcements were

<sup>9</sup> Xiphilin says, from Dio, that, in the engagement near Cremona, 40,000 men fell on both sides. He seems to include all the conflicts which occurred from the arrival of the two armies in the neighbourhood of Placentia; but the statement is probably exaggerative.

expected from Pannonia and Moesia, some spirited officers exhorted Otho not to despair of the retention of his power, but to hazard another battle. He expressed his detestation of civil war, and accused Vitellius of having occasioned it; but, he added, "as the continuance of the  
"unnatural contest depends upon me, it never shall be  
"said, with truth, that I renewed, from ambitious or interested views, the sanguinary struggle. Rather let me  
"sacrifice myself for the restoration of peace, than expose  
"a multitude of my fellow-citizens to an untimely death." No reasonings or expostulations could shake the firmness of his resolution. He dismissed his friends; and, putting a dagger under his pillow, composed himself to rest. Awaking at day-break, he coolly stabbed himself, and died with little sensation of pain. He was in the thirty-seventh year of his age, and had scarcely reigned three months<sup>10</sup>.

The supposed magnanimity of Otho's death excited the general admiration of the Romans. Those who had reviled him when living, extolled him when he had thus quitted the world; and some even said, not with a strict regard to truth, that he had put Galba to death with no other view than the desire of restoring the freedom of republican government. Many, unwilling to survive him, killed themselves at his funeral pile. Even a good and virtuous prince would not have deserved such extravagant respect.

Virginus Rufus was requested by the Othonians to assume the imperial dignity; but he declined the dangerous honor, and avoided by flight the importunities of the soldiery. All then submitted to Vitellius, who was slowly advancing into Italy, while his adherents, in various parts, were indulging themselves in licentiousness, rapine, and outrage. In his progress, he was gladdened with intelligence of the accession of Mauritania to his authority.

<sup>10</sup> Tacit. lib. ii. cap. 42—50.—Sueton.—Plut.—Xiphil.



At Lugdunum, the victorious generals courted his notice, while the vanquished officers trembled with anxiety. He pardoned Paulinus and Proculus, who meanly pretended that, out of regard to him, they had betrayed Otho. Tiberianus was favorably received; and to Celsus the consulate was promised; but the cruelty of the new emperor was evinced by the death of many centurions who had zealously supported Otho, and also by the treacherous murder of Dolabella, who was accused of seditious machinations<sup>11</sup>. His friends, however, applauded his justice, when he gave orders for the capital punishment of 120 soldiers, who had solicited rewards from Otho for their services in accomplishing the ruin or promoting the death of Galba. In passing over the field of slaughter, he surveyed the unburied bodies without the least feeling of horror or commiseration; and, when one of his attendants spoke of the unpleasing *effluvia*, he exclaimed, "The lifeless body of an enemy smells well, particularly when the foe is a fellow-citizen<sup>12</sup>." That such a man should be an admirer of Nero, is not a matter of surprise. He publicly professed a regard for the memory of that monster, and ordered games and sacrifices to his honor.

The new government was administered by some of the most worthless men that the empire afforded; by despicable players, buffoons, charioteers, grooms, cooks, and other citizens of the lowest stamp. Murder was so habitual to the despot and his infamous accomplices, that a forbearance of bloodshed seemed to them a state of misery. Not only plebeians were slaughtered, without guilt, but persons of rank and high respectability were put to death on the most trifling pretences. Even those who, according to the ordinary estimate of friendship, had reason to think themselves the objects of the emperor's regard, were invited to his court, and cruelly assassinated.

<sup>11</sup> Tacit. lib. ii. cap. 60, 63.

<sup>12</sup> Sueton. Vit. Vitellii, cap. 10.

Of a whole class of men,—the mathematicians, or astrologers and soothsayers,—few were suffered to escape death, if the most diligent search could find them. Being offended at the predictions of some of the number, he had ordered the whole body to retire from Italy by a certain day; and the appearance of a *placard*, hinting that at the time specified he should be no more, enraged him almost to phrensy<sup>13</sup>.

As such diabolical tyranny deprived Vitellius of all popularity, the choice of another sovereign occupied the thoughts of the Roman politicians. Some turned their eyes toward Virginius Rufus; but his repeated refusal checked all farther application to him; and the general attention was fixed upon Vespasian. This officer had been sent by Nero to reduce the refractory Jews to full subjection. The appointment met with general approbation; and the courage and talents of the commander and his son Titus were quickly manifested. Before his arrival, the Jews had received a calamitous defeat near Ascalon: they were also unsuccessful in a second attempt upon that town. When he reached Ptolemais, he found Galilee in a state of great confusion, ravaged by the contending parties with fire and sword. He stormed Gadara; reduced Jotapata (which was defended by the historian Josephus) after a long and murderous siege<sup>14</sup>; and prevailed over the Jews on other occasions; but he did not, in that campaign, complete the subjugation of Galilee;—

<sup>13</sup> Sueton. cap. 12, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Josephus was made prisoner, with 1200 men. About 40,000, he says, perished during the siege and in the final assault. He also informs us, that, in an interview with Vespasian, soon after the fall of the town, he predicted the elevation of that general to the imperial sovereignty. He pretended that he was an authorised communicator of the will of God; but he could not substantiate that presumptuous declaration. Superstition apart, he might imagine, from the character and reputation of Vespasian, that his acquisition of a dignity which, in more than one instance, had been very ill bestowed, was not improbable.

with such determined obstinacy did the enemy oppose him. On the renewal of his efforts, he captured the strong town of Tarichea; defeated a squadron on the lake of Genesareth; took Gamala, not without a great loss on the part of the besiegers; and, by other exploits, established the Roman authority over the Galilean province<sup>15</sup>. But the capital of Judæa remained to be subdued.

John, a bold and artful demagogue, who had escaped with an armed party from his native town of Gischala, when it was taken by Titus, vehemently urged the inhabitants of Jerusalem to defend themselves with the utmost zeal. That city was convulsed with licentiousness and faction. Rapine and violence were as habitual as if all government had been annihilated. Dissensions were carried on with the most sanguinary animosity; and no rank or character secured from injury the objects of malevolence. All who recommended or promoted an accommodation with the Romans, whose power could not be opposed with safety, were reviled as enemies of their country, and betrayers of their God. High-priests were chosen by the incendiary faction, without regard to the dignity of birth, or to the claims of ability and virtue; and the very temple became the seat of tyranny and outrage. Shocked at these enormities, some priests and other respectable citizens formed a new confederacy, and, with the aid of the less corrupt part of the populace, obtained some advantages over the disturbers of the public peace, but could not dislodge them from the sacred fortress. The Edomites espoused the cause of the turbulent party, and marched in great force to assist the profane possessors of the temple. In a stormy night, when the confederates were very inattentive and negligent, the intruding army entered the city, met a party of the garrison that sallied out of the temple, and made a conjunct attack upon the besiegers, of whom 8500 were slain before day-break.

15 In the year 67.



Not content with this massacre (for it could not be termed a conflict), the prevailing faction put to death 12,000 citizens, on pretence of their being favorably disposed toward the Romans, and inclined to submit to Vespasian. That general was advised by his officers to take immediate advantage of the distractions of Jerusalem; but he delayed his interference, being of opinion that an attack upon the city would tend to unite the hostile parties, and that, if they should be left for some time to themselves, the exhausting contest would render both an easy prey. In the mean time, he marched to Gadara, and garrisoned the place; while his lieutenant Placidus, pursuing an army of the factious Jews, overtook them near the Jordan, and dyed the stream with their blood. Jericho and other considerable towns were afterward reduced; and Vespasian began to think that Jerusalem might be attacked with a fair prospect of success, when the usurpation and tyranny of Vitellius called his earnest attention to the affairs of Rome<sup>16</sup>.

Vespasian had submitted to Galba, without a thought of revolt: but, when Otho and Vitellius were rivals for the sovereignty, he began to entertain views of towering ambition. He thought himself as well entitled to the highest dignity at Rome, as either of those commanders; and the legions in Judæa wished for an opportunity of elevating their esteemed general to the imperial supremacy.

The boldness and danger of the attempt, and the fame of the Germanic legions, delayed his determination. Prudence struggled with ambition; and a desire of rescuing his country from the most flagitious tyranny was checked by apprehensions of failure and defeat. As soon as the death of Otho was known in the East, Mucianus, governor of Syria, strongly urged him to a defiance of peril, and to an immediate assumption of that dignity which Vitel-

<sup>16</sup> Joseph. de Bellis Judæorum, lib. iii. et iv.

lius disgraced; and the officers eagerly importuned him on the same subject, alleging the facility of crushing a prince who was despised and hated, and announcing auspicious omens and the favorable opinions of soothsayers and sages. He at length yielded to the force of persuasion. He was not uninfluenced by the superstition of the times: but his chief hopes of success rested on the infamous character of Vitellius.

Of the army stationed in Mœsia, a part had been sent to the support of Otho; and the intelligence of his death, communicated during the march, first hurried the soldiers into acts of licentiousness and rapine, and afterward suggested to them the idea of a new election. When several names had been mentioned without exciting general assent, the nomination of Vespasian, by legionaries who had been removed from Syria into Mœsia, put an end to all debate; and his name was immediately inscribed on the standards<sup>17</sup>. This irregular appointment was rapidly propagated by the voice of fame; and the governor of Egypt was no sooner informed of it, than he prevailed upon his troops to take the oath of fidelity to the general who was so highly honored. The legions of Judæa followed the example; those of Syria gave their sanction to the appointment; and some of the vassal princes of Asia threw their weight into the scale. Thus supported, Vespasian began to act as a sovereign, and to provide for the retention of the authority which he had acquired. In a council convoked at Berytus, judicious measures were concerted. Mucianus was sent into Europe with a part of the confederate army, while Titus was intrusted with the government of Judæa; and the new emperor resolved to repair to Alexandria, that he might fully secure the Egyptian province, before his return to Italy<sup>18</sup>.

The accession of Antonius Primus to the confederacy

17 Sueton. Vit. Vespasiani, cap. 6.

18 Tacit. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 79—82.

against Vitellius, tended in no small degree to expedite it's accomplishment. He was a bold enterprising man, a ready and plausible declaimer, a skilful manager of a party, and uncommonly dexterous in the extension of influence. He invigorated the zeal which two of the legions of Pannonia had displayed in the cause of Vespasian; and the procurator Fuscus was equally warm and strenuous.

In a council of war, it was debated whether the troops should hasten into Italy, and force the adherents of Vitellius to action, or should wait for the arrival of the legions from the East, and in the mean time fortify the passes of the Alps. The former opinion, being strongly urged by Antonius, prevailed; and the legionaries advanced to Verona. As Cæcina, who was stationed in that neighbourhood, was inclined to transfer his interest to Vespasian, the advancing troops were not seriously checked by that general, although the soldiers whom he commanded were not disposed to acquiesce in his desertion of Vitellius. When the fleet at Ravenna had revolted from the emperor, Cæcina was encouraged to a disclosure of his views; but the indignant legionaries reviled him as a traitor, arrested him, and reserved him for punishment. Under the nominal authority of Fabius, who was chosen to succeed him, several engagements were risked with Antonius, without the honor of victory. The latter having invested Cremona, the defence was, for some time, as spirited as the siege: but the Vitellians, despairing of the preservation of the town, after the besiegers had stormed the exterior works with sanguinary effect, deputed Cæcina to adjust a capitulation. This favor was so far from being granted, that the assailants pillaged the temples and the principal houses, massacred many of the inhabitants, and set fire to the town<sup>19</sup>.

19 Tacit. lib. iii. cap. 1—4, 12—33.—In the siege and reduction of Cremona, and the preceding conflicts, 50,000 persons are said to have lost their lives (*Xiphilin*). Josephus says, that 30,200 of the soldiers of Vitellius were killed, and only 4,500 of the partisans of Vespasian.



Vitellius, immersed in the torpor of gluttony, seemed insensible of his danger. Trusting to his generals for the defence of the empire, he was almost as inattentive to public affairs, as if profound peace had prevailed. But, when he was informed of the revolt of his fleet and the treachery of Cæcina, he left the groves of Aricinum; and, returning to Rome, assembled the senate. He found the members as servile as he could wish; but their affected zeal could not avert the rising storm. He deprived Cæcina of the consular dignity, and dismissed a friend of that general from the prætorian præfecture. Junius Blæsus was poisoned by his order, on pretence of ambitious and hostile views. Upon the courage and fidelity of Valens he chiefly depended; and, having sent a reinforcement to the camp of that commander, he seemed to think that his enemies would soon be crushed.

Alarmed at the progress of Antonius, Valens resolved to visit Gaul, in the hope of rousing, to the vigorous defence of his master, the people and the troops of that extensive province: but he was so unfortunate in his attempts for the execution of his purpose, that he was stopped near Massilia, and detained by the Gallic procurator. His captivity had a speedy effect to the disadvantage of his master. The legions in Spain, Gaul, and Britain, declared for Vespasian; and every thing seemed to lead to his complete success.

Antonius was so elate with his recent exploits, that he expected to triumph over Vitellius without the aid of Mucianus; who, on the other hand, was jealous of the reputation of the bold partisan of Vespasian, and wished to check his progress, that he himself might arrive in time for the completion of the great work.

The progress of the enemy roused the emperor to an appearance of exertion. He sent Priscus and Alphenus, with a considerable force, to block up the Apennine passes, and assigned to his brother Lucius the defence of Rome,

while he enacted political and civil regulations, calculated for the gratification of the people. At the request of the troops, he made his appearance in the camp ; but his military incompetence, and his confusion at every unfavorable rumor, rather exposed him to contempt, than promoted his interest ; and, as soon as he heard of the defection of another fleet, he returned to Rome, on pretence of providing for the public welfare. His brother, who was sent to suppress a revolt in Campania, was by no means successful ; and the inhabitants of other provinces, encouraged by the negligence of their sovereign, embraced the cause of his rival.

Notwithstanding the severity of the winter, and in defiance of all opposition, Antonius and the legions passed the Apennines, and reached the banks of the Nar. Priscus and Alphenus, intimidated by the arrival of reinforcements in the camp of the revolters, left the army in Umbria, and returned to their master. The troops, thus deserted, and finding that Valens (whom they supposed to be employed in levying troops in Gaul or Germany) had been put to death for supporting a tyrant, capitulated with Vespasian's generals, who, being informed of the dejection of Vitellius, offered him money and a safe retreat, if he would surrender himself and his children to his competitor. He listened to this application, and was inclined to prefer the security of a private life to a continuance of the contest for imperial power<sup>20</sup>.

Sabinus, the elder brother of Vespasian, not being considered as an abettor of the revolt, was still allowed to act as præfect of Rome. He was now urged by many of the principal citizens to act as a leader of the Anti-Vitellian party ; but he was unwilling to come forward in any other capacity than that of an advocate of peace. With this view, he held several conferences with the emperor, who declared his readiness to relinquish the contest.

In an assembly of the people, Vitellius presented himself in a mourning habit with his family, and excited the compassion of the few who did not consider him as an object of just odium, or who, in contemplating his reverse of fortune, forgot his vices and his crimes. With a melancholy aspect, and even with tears, he resigned his authority from a desire of peace, and recommended his brother, wife, and offspring, to the regard and protection of his countrymen. Taking his sword from his side, he delivered it to the consul Cæcilius, as an intimation that he relinquished all power over the lives of the people<sup>21</sup>. The inferior class of the community insisted upon his retention of authority; but the principal senators and many of the knights were so willing to accept his resignation, that they importunately urged Sabinus to act in the name of Vespasian, whom they declared to be the lawful emperor. As this step exposed him to the attacks of the Vitellians, he retired to the Capitol for safety. Having complained of their infraction of the treaty, he received an apology from Vitellius, who disavowed the aggression, alleging that the fault could only be imputed to the unauthorised licentiousness of the soldiers. The Capitol being fiercely assaulted, either the besieged set it on fire to confound the enemy, or the besiegers to harass the garrison<sup>22</sup>. The Vitellians soon became masters of the venerable spot, which they polluted with outrage and slaughter.

<sup>21</sup> Tacitus speaks of this change in the fortune of Vitellius with such marks of feeling as the character of that prince was not calculated to arouse. "There was no one," he says, "so inobservant or unmindful of human affairs, as to be unmoved at the sight of a Roman emperor, so lately the lord of mankind, retiring from the seat of his fortune and power, and humbling himself before the people whom he had governed." If his merit or virtue had been equal to his high rank, and he had been compelled by unmerited injuries to resign his dignity, compassion for him would not have been misplaced: but, when a depraved, profligate, and cruel prince, was obliged to quit a station of which he was wholly unworthy, no friend of mankind could poignantly feel for his misfortune.

<sup>22</sup> Tacitus says, that the more prevalent opinion attributed it to the defenders.



Sabinus was seized with the consul Atticus; and, while the life of this magistrate was spared, the præfect was put to death, without regard either to the general integrity of his character, or to his disinclination for hostile measures and sanguinary contests.

A gleam of success, at some distance from Rome, shone upon the arms of Vitellius. His brother, guided by a deserter, surprised Terracina, and massacred the greater part of the garrison; and, if this commander had hastened to the metropolis, the contest might have been attended with the ruin of the city. While he waited for instructions, the troops of Vespasian advanced toward Rome. Petilius Cerealis, being sent with a body of horse to encourage the friends of that general, was repelled with disgrace; and the plebeian citizens, eagerly taking all the arms which they could find, desired Vitellius to give the signal for action. He thanked them for their zeal, but sent deputies to propose an accommodation. Those who applied to Petilius were rudely treated, and with difficulty escaped the extremity of outrage; while the citizens who offered to treat with Antonius were received with due respect. No treaty was the result of the application, even though the Vestal virgins personally solicited peace. The answer given to an epistle which they delivered from Vitellius, imported, that the murder of Sabinus and the destruction of the Capitol precluded all negotiation<sup>23</sup>.

Ruin now impended over the humbled tyrant. The revolvers hastened to the city in three divisions, and were met by the Vitellians in three bodies. Various conflicts ensued, and great slaughter was the dreadful consequence of mutual animosity. The gates were forced by the vigor of Antonius: and the prætorian camp was taken by a repetition of assault. For some time the fury of the victors rose above all restraint, the voice of humanity

23 Tacit. lib. iii. cap. 76—81.—Xiphil.

being unheard amidst the licentiousness of sanguinary triumph.

Vitellius, sensible of his danger, retired to his paternal house upon the Aventine hill<sup>24</sup>, intending, on the approach of night, to seek refuge in his brother's camp. Encouraged by a rumor of peace, he returned to the palace; but, being appalled by the melancholy silence of a deserted mansion, he fled, with all the money that he could collect, to a porter's lodge, and formed a hasty barricade. He was soon dragged from his retreat by the soldiers who were in search of him: his hands were tied behind him; a rope was put about his neck; his clothes were almost torn off; and, in this state of degradation (with a dagger put under his chin, to force him to hold up his head), he was led through the city, amidst a profusion of contumely and invective, to the spot where the bodies of criminals were usually exposed. To an officer who insulted him, he said, with an air of dignity, "You ought to remember that I was once your emperor." He was then attacked with many weapons, pierced in almost every part of his frame, and contemptuously thrown into the Tiber. After his death, the confusion and slaughter at Rome did not immediately cease: even the high authority of Antonius proved inadequate to the task of restoring order, until the thirst of vengeance was satiated<sup>25</sup>.

As the success was not complete while the troops under Lucius Vitellius remained embodied, a detachment was sent to disperse them, or reduce them to submission. Their commander, without hesitation, surrendered himself and his cohorts to the will of the conqueror. He was put to death; and the son of the late emperor was not permitted to live. The senate assembled when peace was thus restored, and took into consideration the letters of Vespasian and Mucianus. To the former, all the adjuncts

<sup>24</sup> With only two companions—a baker and a cook. *Sueton.*

<sup>25</sup> Tacit. lib. iii. cap. 85; iv. 1.—*Sueton.* cap. 16, 17.—*Xiphil.*

of imperial sovereignty were voted; to his friend, triumphal honors were allowed. Titus and his father were declared consuls; and the appellation of Cæsar was assigned to him and to his brother Domitian<sup>26</sup>.

While the people anxiously expected the appearance of the new emperor, Mucianus arrived at Rome. The chief power was instantly transferred, from Antonius, to him and to Domitian; and they exercised it with arrogance and cruelty, rather wishing to inspire terror than to conciliate the public. They gave orders for the death of a young man of distinction, who had not committed the smallest offence; merely because some loquacious politicians spoke of him as a proper candidate for the sovereignty.

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## LETTER X.

### *History of the Reigns of VESPASIAN, TITUS, and DOMITIAN.*

THE sanguinary commotions which had preceded and followed the death of Nero, had so unhinged the state, that both prudence and vigor were requisite to heal the wounds inflicted by intestine animosity. Those qualities were known to be united in Vespasian; and the public, therefore, had reason to expect a steadiness of government and a full restoration of order and tranquillity.

Mucianus and Domitian were still at the head of the administration, when the hostilities of the Batavians assumed a serious aspect. One of their chiefs, A. D. 69. Claudius Civilis, being suspected of ambitious views, had been imprisoned by Nero; but he was released by Galba; and, when the officers of Vitellius, sent to levy

<sup>26</sup> Tacit. lib. iv. cap. 2—4.—Xiphil.



troops in Batavia, gave a loose to violence and outrage, he urged his countrymen to shake off the disgraceful yoke, as an alliance with Rome seemed to involve subjection. Many instantly joined him; and, with the aid of the Frisians, he overpowered two Roman cohorts. Not being vigorously opposed by Flaccus and the legionaries, he easily augmented his force, and obtained some important advantages. He pretended to serve and support Vespasian; but his real aim was to establish Batavian independence, and to weaken, as much as possible, the Roman interest in Germany and Gaul. Two legions having retreated to a station near the Rhine, called the *old camp*, he attempted to take it by assault; but, as his men were unskilful in sieges, he tried the effect of a blockade. Vocola, being sent to the rescue of the legions, exposed his troops to the danger of destruction, by a want of intelligence respecting the enemy's movements. He had not time to make a regular disposition of his force: his cavalry fled at the first onset; his Gallic auxiliaries also retreated; and confusion began to spread among the legionaries. Soon, however, an agreeable change took place. Some cohorts, arriving in the field at a time when the enemy seemed to be victorious, furiously assailed the rear; and, being supposed to be far more numerous than they really were, they threw the insurgents into disorder, and, with the aid of the rallied troops, slew the flower of the adverse army. But Vocola, who, if he had been an able general, might have rendered this success subservient to the immediate relief of the blockaded legions, neglected the opportunity, and wasted several days in idleness. Civilis, by claiming the victory, endeavoured to intimidate the legions into a surrender; but a prisoner denied the assertion of that commander, and, for affirming the truth, was stabbed by the enraged revoltors. Vocola at length reached the legionary station; and a well-contested conflict arose. Being supported by a seasonable sally, he

again prevailed over Civilis, and again forbore to pursue his advantage. Other hostilities were followed by a mutiny, in which Flaccus was murdered, immediately after he had distributed among the soldiers, in the name of Vespasian, a considerable sum of money which had been sent by Vitellius. They accused him of shameful negligence, and reproached him as an encourager of the enemy; and Vocula escaped their violence by retiring in disguise. The mutineers fled at the approach of the foe; but, when they coolly reflected on their conduct, they were induced to follow their general, and to promise strict fidelity and attachment to Vespasian<sup>1</sup>.

As it was found so difficult to crush this revolt, the provincials, in various parts of Gaul, were encouraged to follow a similar course. Classicus, who enjoyed a high degree of estimation among the Treviri, roused the people to a new attempt for the recovery of their liberty. The Lingones joined in the insurrection; and some other communities sent troops to support the cause of their country. Vocula, who had not a sufficient force to suppress this new revolt, advanced from the Rhine to amuse the leaders, rather than to attack the Gallic army.

The intercourse which now arose between the soldiers in the opposite camps led to an extraordinary desertion, on the part of the Romans. So many of their number joined Classicus, after he had entered into a confederacy with the Batavian and German revolters, that Vocula was nearly deserted. He was so shocked at this disgrace, that he was on the point of offering violence to himself; and, when his hand had been checked by his freed-men and slaves, he was murdered by a legionary, to whom Classicus had given secret instructions. The insurgent leader, assuming the title of emperor of Gaul, exacted an oath of allegiance from the Romans; and, advancing to the *old*

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 13—37.

*camp*, insisted upon an immediate surrender. The pressure of famine produced a capitulation; but the besieged, instead of being suffered to retire in safety, were treacherously attacked by the German followers of Civilis. Many were massacred; and others, when they had returned to the camp, were burned to death by the ruthless barbarians<sup>2</sup>.

In the pride of success, a contest for superiority occurred between Civilis and Classicus; but, for some time, they acted in concert, and eagerly promoted an extension of the revolt. They drew Cologne and other flourishing towns into the league; and, having prevailed over Claudius Labeo in a conflict, received the Nervii and the Tongri as allies. At the same time, Julius Sabinus, who claimed the merit of high birth from the alleged connexion of his great-grandmother with the conqueror of Gaul, ordered his partisans to salute him with the appellation of Cæsar, and led a tumultuary host of Lingones against the Sequani, who had refused to shake off the Roman yoke. Far from triumphing in the field, his followers suffered a total defeat. He fled with the utmost rapidity, and remained for many years in concealment, while it was generally supposed that he had destroyed himself.

This revolt, being magnified by the voice of rumor, greatly perplexed Mucianus, who was unwilling to leave Rome under the arbitrary sway of Domitian, and could not easily find a general fully qualified, in his opinion, to conduct the war against the Gauls and Germans. After long deliberation, he resolved to march with Domitian against the revolters. The report of his preparations checked the progress of insurrection in Gaul; and, a council being holden, in the capital of the Remi, for the decision of the grand question of peace or war, the majority, influenced by the moderation of Auspex, rather than by



the vehemence of Valentinus, voted for a continuance of submission. The consideration of eventual discord among the states, and the difficulty of fixing the seat of empire, if Gaul should now aim at independence, greatly contributed to this decision.

The result of this meeting cooled the ardor of the insurgents, and gave vigor to dissension. Classicus gave himself a respite from the toils of war; Civilis amused himself with the pursuit of Labeo; and Julius Tutor was scarcely more active than the leaders with whom he had promised to co-operate. The last, being attacked by some Roman cohorts, suffered them to rout his force with facility; and Valentinus, when he had collected the fugitives, and fortified a post near the Moselle, found himself unable to defend it against Petilius Cerealis. To this commander the hostile leaders sent proposals of accommodation, calculated to delude rather than effectually to conciliate. He sent their messenger to inform Domitian of the objects of negotiation, and prepared to bring the confederates to a general engagement. In a council of war, Civilis advised delay, until some expected reinforcements should arrive: but Tutor was of opinion, that the Romans would derive greater advantage in that respect; and Classicus recommended an acceptance of the challenge of Cerealis. With eager haste the revolvers advanced, and commenced the action before the Romans were regularly arranged. They repelled the cavalry; and, having also disordered the infantry, they promised themselves the honor and benefit of victory. Cerealis saw his danger, without dismay or trepidation. He rallied many who were retreating, dislodged the enemy from a bridge which had been seized over the Moselle, and exerted himself with such vigor, that he at length became master of the field: but his success was chequered by adverse incidents. Classicus routed a detachment of cavalry; and the Caninefates, en-

countering a Roman fleet near the Batavian coast, sank or captured the greater part of the armament <sup>3</sup>.

Civilis was so far from being discouraged, that he resolved to risque another conflict; for which Cerealis was equally eager. After a trial of strength amidst morasses fed by the Rhine, in which the insurgents had the advantage, the two armies engaged with decisive views. The auxiliaries were quickly thrown into disorder by the impetuosity of the Germans, whose long spears were used with great dexterity: but, when the legionaries came up, the battle became more equal. While the event remained doubtful, a Batavian deserter pointed out a way, by which the Roman cavalry might suddenly fall upon the enemy in the rear; and this movement enabled Cerealis to secure the victory: but the pursuit was impeded by rain and the approach of night. Civilis escaped from the field, and, soon after, meditated the interception of Cerealis, who was carelessly returning down the Rhine from a survey of posts. The vessel in which he was supposed to be present, was taken; but, being then in a different situation, engaged in an intrigue with an Ubian female, he avoided capture. He soon after offered peace to the Batavians; and Civilis, at their desire, agreed to a treaty, by which they were exempted from all tribute, but not from the obligation of furnishing troops to the Romans <sup>4</sup>.

Mucianus, more intent upon the exercise of power at Rome, than on the recovery of due subordination in Gaul and Germany, had deferred his march, and at length resolved to trust to the military skill of Cerealis. He was not only apprehensive of the irregular attempts of Domitian, but jealous of the popularity of Antonius Primus and Varus. These rivals he did not dare to assail with violence; but he studiously kept them in check.

<sup>3</sup> Tacit. lib. iv. cap. 70, 71, 76—79.

<sup>4</sup> Tacit. lib. v. cap. 18, 22, 24.

Domitian, while he seemed to be immersed in pleasure, had a strong inclination for power; and he is said to have clandestinely applied to Cerealis for a surrender of the army to his will, not perhaps with a view of supplanting his father, but of securing the succession in preference to his elder brother. His application being evaded, or treated with contempt, he concealed his ambition, and affected to cultivate the Muses, rather than pursue the maze of politics.

Varus, being considered as too powerful while he enjoyed the command of the imperial guard, was removed by Mucianus to the post of superintendant of the supply of provisions. Antonius, disgusted at the haughty and unfriendly demeanor of the ruling senator, left Rome, and joined Vespasian in his progress. He was not received with those marks of favor to which he was entitled by his services; for the emperor apprehended that an extraordinary display of regard would unpleasingly augment the vanity and presumption of his partisan: yet he treated him with respect, as an active and useful friend.

The government of Mucianus continued to be arbitrary and sometimes cruel; more capricious than steady, more violent than legitimate. But, as he provided for the restoration of order, and secured the supreme power for the absent prince, his general conduct met with approbation, while particular acts exposed him to censure. He would have given greater satisfaction to the public, if he had punished the calumnious accusers who had been so basely subservient to the cruelty of Nero. He, indeed, suffered the senate to condemn Egnatius, whose fabricated testimony had been adduced against Soranus: but he favored Eprius Marcellus, the infamous accuser of Thræsea, and checked those inquiries which would have unmasked the guilt of other profligate informers<sup>5</sup>.



Turning his eye to the African province, he affected to consider the proconsul Piso as unfriendly to the sway of Vespasian. His jealousy had already proved fatal to an innocent relative of the governor; but his cruelty was not satiated with that sacrifice. He was informed that the provincials and soldiery were far from being zealous in the cause of the new emperor, and that some fugitive Vitellians had instigated Piso to oppose him; and, without condescending to inquire whether the governor had listened to such advice, or had taken any steps to the prejudice of Vespasian's interest, he sent a centurion to murder him. Piso put the emissary to death, but was soon after assassinated by order of Valerius Festus, who had been appointed to the command of a legion as a check upon the proconsul, and who, while it was doubtful whether he had encouraged Piso to a revolt, or had checked his views in that respect, seemed eager to prove himself the friend of Vespasian.

Trusting to the power of his partisans at Rome, the emperor slowly moved from the East. He remained for some time at Alexandria, adjusting the affairs of Egypt, and (as Tacitus seems to have believed) working miracles<sup>6</sup>! But his reputed supernatural power did not render him popular among the Alexandrians, who, expecting some marks of gratitude and liberality for their early submission to his power, were miserably disappointed, when they found themselves the objects of his inordinate rapacity<sup>7</sup>. Disregarding the animadversions to which this conduct exposed him, he did not desist from his exactions.

Leaving Egypt in tranquillity, he sailed to Rhodes, and, having shown himself in the chief towns of Ionia and

<sup>6</sup> He is said to have restored sight to a blind man by spitting upon his cheeks and eyes, and to have cured a paralytic hand by treading upon it. "Persons who were present (says the historian) speak positively of these particulars, when they have no motive for falsehood." Suetonius and Dio have also mentioned these cures, as if they supposed them to have really occurred: but no modern reader will be so credulous.

<sup>7</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

Greece, embarked at Corcyra for Italy. He was received in his progress with general acclamations ; and, on his approach to the metropolis, the major part of the population thronged to meet him. Praises were lavished upon him by the joy of the multitude : he was hailed as the friend and protector of Rome, and the restorer of peace and order. All the streets of the city were decorated with garlands : incense exhaled it's odors in every part ; and, while he sacrificed to his household Gods in gratitude for his safe return to the seat of his destined power, the people indulged themselves in jovial festivity.

The rebuilding of the Capitol, being deemed essentially necessary both in point of religion and of policy, occupied his early attention. He gave instructions for the work ; but the immediate director was Vestinus, a man of talent and reputation. In the pompous ceremony of laying the foundation, the high-priest led the way : the prætor Helvidius Priscus, amidst sacrifices, implored the favor of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva : senators and magistrates assisted the people in drawing stones to the spot ; and pieces of gold and silver, uncoined, were deposited with the first stone <sup>8</sup>.

While Vespasian ably superintended the concerns of government, Titus devoted his attention to the subjugation of the Jews. For the important siege which his father had ordered him to undertake, he advanced with four legions, beside a numerous army of Asiatic auxiliaries. Jerusalem, at that time, was convulsed by the animosities of three parties. John of Gischala and his adherents kept possession of the interior temple ; Eleazar and the zealots occupied the grand sanctuary ; and Simon, the son of Gioras, favored by the bulk of the population, ruled over the upper town and the major part of the lower division. The first of these leaders, having the advantage

<sup>8</sup> Tacit. lib. iv. cap. 53.

of the third in point of situation, plied the citizens with javelins from the tops of the porticoes ; but he could not effectually harass the followers of Eleazar, who were stationed above him, with the stones and arrows which were copiously discharged against them. When he sallied out upon the people, and drove Simon before him, he burned all the granaries and habitations in his way, and madly occasioned or accelerated that famine and distress in which his own party could not avoid being ultimately involved<sup>9</sup>.

The approach of a powerful enemy ought to have united all parties, either in opposition to the invaders, if there was a prospect of effectual defence, or in the task of negotiation : but it had an imperfect influence over the violent animosities of the Jews. The factious leaders, indeed, professed patriotic and friendly sentiments ; and, to evince their desire of union, the three parties concurred in a sally upon one of the legions, then employed in fortifying the camp. So unexpected was the shock, that the Romans fled in confusion from their entrenchments, and the whole legion would probably have been cut off, if Titus had not seasonably arrived with a reinforcement, which obstructed the triumph of the enemy. During a short respite from Roman hostility, discord revived in the city. The temple being opened by Eleazar for general worship at the time of the paschal feast, John sent an armed party to mingle with the votaries, and take an opportunity of gaining possession of the holy edifice by violence and murder. He succeeded in his aim ; and, the zealots being overpowered, the contending factions were reduced to two. He took Eleazar into his service with 2400 of the zealots, and with 6000 additional combatants, garrisoned all the sacred precincts ; while Simon's armed force amounted to 15,000 men<sup>10</sup>.

After an accurate survey of the three walls and fortifi-

<sup>9</sup> Joseph. lib. vi. cap. 1.—Tacit. lib. v.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph. lib. vi. cap. 3, 4, 7.—Tacit.



cations, Titus fixed upon three spots where attacks might be made with less danger than in other parts. When the battering-rams were ready for action, the inhabitants felt great terror : but the two parties roused all their courage ; and many men from the temple, suspending their dissensions, joined Simon's adherents in the defence of the walls. They discharged a variety of missiles with zealous activity, leaped from the walls with an undaunted air, and endeavoured to set fire to the Roman engines. In a sally from one of their towers, they pushed forward so boldly, that the van of the besiegers retreated in confusion to the camp ; and all the engines would have been destroyed, if a body of Alexandrians had not exerted the utmost vigor in baffling every attempt for that purpose. Titus, with a party of horse, then came up, and completed the repulse of the Jews. When a breach had been made in the first wall, the Jews left it to the enemy, trusting to the defence of the second. In repeated sallies, they fiercely encountered the legionaries, and seemed to defy danger and death : but they made little impression upon the Romans and their numerous auxiliaries, who, by a renewal of attack, gained the second wall, and garrisoned its towers. Titus now hoped that the besieged, who were grievously harassed by famine, would capitulate to avoid farther calamities : but they obstinately persisted in the defence of their capital. In vain did their countryman Josephus, the friend of the Roman general, remind them of their danger, and enforce the expediency of submission to a power which they could not long withstand : they ridiculed his advice, and reviled him as a base deserter. They were again urged to submit, after Titus had crucified a number of famished men who had left the city ; an act of brutal inhumanity, by which he only inflamed the resentment of the garrison<sup>11</sup>.

In the progress of the siege, four lofty bulwarks were

<sup>11</sup> Joseph. lib. vi. cap. 8, 10—12.

raised by the Romans, who began to batter the third wall with great vigor. Under one of these works, John dug a mine, and kept it up for a time by wooden props, rubbed with bitumen. By this contrivance that bulwark was set on fire; and a bold party, sallying out, burned the engines upon the other works, and destroyed the labor of seventeen days. Titus, with a select body, endeavoured to cut off the detachment which had made such havoc; but, in this attack, he only met with partial success. A plan of circumvallation was now formed; and, as the greater part of the army prosecuted the work with alacrity, it was completed within three days. It's extent nearly amounted to five miles; and on it's outside were thirteen large forts. In consequence of this obstruction of all supplies, the famine in the city became more horribly severe and afflictive: the streets and houses were filled with the dead and the dying; the soldiers threw a multitude of bodies into the valley that bordered one side of the town; and even the besiegers began to dread the eruption of a pestilential disease in their camp from the vapors of putrefaction.

Upon a steep rock near the temple, stood a fort called Antonia, which seemed to defy an assault. John had strengthened it with additional works, and, as he flattered himself, had infused his own spirit into it's defenders: but they did not observe that vigilance which was necessary to guard against a surprisal. A breach being made in the exterior wall of the fort, the Romans approached another wall, recently erected, and made preparations for an assault. A small party, mounting in the night, found the guard sleeping, and entered the place. A strong detachment followed; and a battle ensued, which continued for ten hours. After great loss on both sides, the Jews baffled the attempts of the enemy to gain the inner temple, but could not save the fort<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Joseph. lib. vii. cap. 1, 2.

After a short respite, a nocturnal conflict occurred, in which neither party triumphed. The reduction of the temple was the next object of the besiegers, who raised four platforms, from which their engines might effectually play against it. Near one of these erections, the Jews secretly placed combustibles about the roof of the western portico, and then retreated, as if they could no longer defend it. When the Romans were eagerly thronging to take possession of it, the flames burst forth; and confusion seized the whole party. Some leaped into wells and pits; some rushed desperately amidst the enemy; and others stabbed themselves, while many perished by suffocation.

When the batteries had played upon the temple for some time with little effect, and mining had been also tried without advantage, a scalade was attempted with considerable loss. Titus then ordered the gates to be fired; and, the besieged not being aware of such an intention, their alarm was excessive. The flames reached the galleries of the temple; and the subsequent movements of the army prognosticated the ruin of the splendid edifice. Titus consulted his principal officers upon his farther operations; and, while some advised him to destroy the temple, if it should be taken, others concurred with him in a wish for its preservation. When the Jews had been repelled in a fresh sally, it was resolved that the whole army should, on the following day, assault the holy structure. The troops were preparing for this final service, when a soldier leaped upon the shoulders of a companion, and, unlicensed by superior authority, threw a torch into one of the apartments through a window; and some of the door-posts were soon after set on fire. Titus in vain endeavoured, by orders and menaces, to stop the progress of the flames; and, in the confusion which prevailed, the exertions of the Jews for the same purpose were equally abortive. The besiegers rushed forward, and slew all



whom they met: but many of the Jews found the means of retiring into the city. A multitude of both sexes, meeting in a gallery and a portico, experienced the brutal vengeance of the soldiers, who, firing those appendages of the temple, would not suffer any one of the whole number to escape death<sup>13</sup>. Even Titus, who frequently boasted of his mildness and clemency, was so far from being influenced at this time by the feelings of humanity, that he put to death some priests who had submitted; alleging that, as the temple was destroyed, they ought not to survive the loss of a sanctuary with which they were so closely connected;—a cruel insult, unworthy of his understanding and character.

Confounded at the ruin of the temple, the Jewish leaders proposed a negotiation with the Roman general. He consented to spare the lives of the besieged, if they would immediately resign their arms, and surrender their persons. The reply was too spirited to please him. They were willing to give up the city, and retire into the desert, but declared that they would not yield themselves upon any promise which he might be induced to give. He was so exasperated at this declaration, that, protesting against all renewals of conference, he menaced the enemy with a rigorous enforcement of the rules of war.

The factious chiefs were almost as hostile to their countrymen as even the Romans were. Taking possession of the royal palace in the lower division of the city, they murdered a great number<sup>14</sup> of those inhabitants whom the famine had suffered to linger in existence, and carried off to the upper town the most valuable spoils. Within the walls, every part was a scene of calamity and horror. All the feelings of humanity were extinct; and murder was an habitual and daily occupation.

For the reduction of the upper town, new mounts and other preparations were requisite. While these were in

13 Joseph. lib. vii. cap. 9—11, 13.

14 Almost 8400, says Josephus.

progress, the officers of the Edomites, in the army of Simon, sent deputies, in the name of their whole body, to offer submission to Titus, and to implore mercy. He promised to spare their lives ; and this declaration was a sufficient encouragement to desertion. The messengers, as soon as they had returned, were put to death by Simon ; but all his vigilance could not prevent many of the Edomites from entering the hostile camp. These deserters, and all the citizens who retired, were either sold as slaves, or dismissed.

The new works had a speedy effect in intimidating the Jews, who were so confounded at the sight of some breaches in the wall, that they abandoned three towers of extraordinary elevation and strength, against which no batteries could play with decisive force. Upon these towers the Romans planted their ensigns with loud shouts ; and the reduction of the holy city was now accomplished<sup>15</sup>.

Titus did not sufficiently check the fury of his soldiers, when they had overpowered all resistance. They profusely shed the blood of the unfortunate Jews, and added the havock of conflagration to the ravages of the sword. When they were weary of the work of carnage, they offered mercy to a great number of their suppliant enemies ; but, of these captives, 11,000 died of hunger under the pretended care of the besiegers. Among the prisoners were Simon and John, who were reserved, with seven hundred of their countrymen (the most portly and graceful that could be selected), for the ornaments of the triumphal celebrity. The city and all its fortifications were destroyed, except a small part of the wall and the three towers, which Titus particularly ordered to be preserved, as memorials of his success and of the skill of the Jews in military architecture<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph. cap. 16.

<sup>16</sup> From the beginning of the siege to the departure of the victorious general.

The discovery of an abundance of gold and silver, and other valuable property which had been concealed, gave Titus an opportunity of rewarding those who had distinguished themselves during the siege. After sacrifices and entertainments, he repaired to Cæsarea Philippi, where he exhibited various spectacles, and presided at multiplied games and sports. On the anniversary of Domitian's birth, his cruelty was more conspicuous than his taste or liberality; for he ordered the Jewish captives to fight with each other and with wild beasts, until 2500 lost their lives,—too trifling a sacrifice (says their countryman) in the opinion of the Romans, who hated the race of Israel<sup>17</sup>. He celebrated Vespasian's birth-day at Berytus with greater magnificence, if not with equal inhumanity.

At the close of this remarkable siege, the Jews ceased to be a distinct nation. For many centuries from that time, they suffered every species of discouragement, in the different countries in which they could procure an ostensible asylum: they were illiberally stigmatised, and cruelly harassed; yet their race continued to subsist; and, when the persecution ceased or declined, their leaders enriched themselves by an indefatigable zeal in pecuniary pursuits.

When Titus was returning to Italy, a rumor was propa-

neral, 1,100,000 persons perished by famine, disease, or the sword, if we may give credit to the authority of Josephus, whom Zonaras and Jornandes have followed: but, in some editions of Tacitus, we read, "*Multitudinem obsessorum omnis ætatis, virilis ac muliebris sexûs, sexcenta millia fuisse accepimus.*" This reading, indeed, is not supported by all the manuscripts: for some have 200,000, instead of 600,000, for the whole number of the garrison and inhabitants. Josephus seems to have exaggerated the amount of the victims; and, on the other hand, Tacitus may be presumed to have under-rated the population.—The duration of this disastrous siege was less than five months.

The first erection of a town upon this spot preceded the reign of Melchizedek, Abraham's contemporary; who, although he has been considered as the founder of Jerusalem, seems only to have repaired and enlarged the former town of Solyma or Salem.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph. cap. 20.



gated to his prejudice, as if he intended to revolt from his parent, and erect an independent sovereignty in the East<sup>18</sup>. His conduct did not afford the least foundation for the report, which merely arose from the regard and esteem professed for him by the soldiery. If his father suspected him of such disloyalty, he was agreeably undeceived ; for he found Titus an affectionate, respectful, and submissive son, and a faithful political associate.

For the conquest of Judæa, a separate triumph was decreed to the emperor and his son ; but both expressed a wish that the honors might be united. The *apparatus* and accompaniments were very splendid : the sculptural and pictorial representations of the war in general, and of the siege in particular, were greatly admired ; and the spoils, saved from the conflagration of the temple, attracted peculiar notice. Simon was not suffered long to survive the ceremony ; for, after he had attended the procession, he was put to an ignominious death, while Vespasian and his two sons were adoring Jupiter in the Capitol<sup>19</sup>.

The administration of the emperor continued, but not without occasional exceptions, to be marked by prudence and wisdom. The government abounded with disorders, which required all the care and attention of a skilful physician. He began with a strict repression of military licentiousness, which had risen to an alarming height. Numerous dismissions were ordered ; and all who were permitted to remain were subjected to the ancient discipline. The senatorial and equestrian orders were also reformed ; and not only the deficiencies of the supreme council were properly supplied, but the privileges and dignity of the members were in a great measure restored. Abuses in point of judicature were corrected, and new judges were chosen for the speedy determination of the numerous causes which had long been depending. Some-

18 Sueton. Vit. Titi, cap. 5.

19 Joseph. cap. 24.

times the emperor personally presided in the judicial courts ; and, on these occasions, his decisions merited the applause which they received. To private applications for justice, he was also very ready to attend, not rejecting or disregarding the petitions even of the lowest citizens. In his reign, the innocent in general were secure ;—a remark which could not be so properly applied to the government of any one of his predecessors from the time of Augustus<sup>20</sup>.

While he diligently attended to every object of internal administration, he was not so unmindful of foreign affairs, as to neglect the supposed interest of Rome. Being informed by the governor of Syria, that the king of Comagene intended to submit to the Parthian monarch, he ordered preventive measures to be taken ; and the vassal

A. D. 72. prince was dispossessed of his realm, after a spirited conflict between his sons and the legionaries<sup>21</sup>.

The emperor's regard for justice was not manifested on this occasion ; for he did not make any inquiry into the truth of the information. He considered himself as sufficiently gracious and merciful in suffering a prince, who was an object of suspicion, to enjoy the benefit of life. He released him from that degrading custody to which he had been subjected by the malignant governor, and gave an amicable reception at Rome to him and his sons, while he added Comagene to the imperial provinces.

Several other states or principalities were also reduced into a provincial form, on pretence of the irregularities of their respective governments, and of the prevailing dissensions and disorders. Among the recorded subversions of that independence which was scarcely more than nominal, we find the names of Lycia, Rhodes, Samos, and Byzantium. Greece was also deprived

A. D. 73. of that freedom which even Nero had restored

20 Sueton. Vit. Vespasiani, cap. 8—10.—Xiphil. Hist.

21 Joseph. de Bellis Jud. lib. vii. cap. 27.

to an admired people; and Thrace and Cilicia were, about the same time, completely provinciated. The Roman power was thus more strictly defined and settled in each territory; and the popular submission was more effectually secured<sup>22</sup>.

While Vespasian provided, in his general conduct, for the happiness and comfort of his people, he followed, in one respect, a reprehensible course, and a tyrannical system. I allude to his financial rapacity, which he carried to a disgraceful excess. He re-ordained the collection of repealed taxes, and imposed many new and rigorous burthens. In some of the provinces, the public demands were even doubled by this prince. He sold offices; pardoned those delinquents who offered pecuniary redemption; and practised all the arts of a trader with the same inordinate thirst of lucre.

His friends vindicated his rapine by boasting of his great liberality: but this, though a palliation of his meanness, was not a satisfactory defence. Either in public or in private life, justice ought to precede generosity. Some degree of praise, however, is due to the emperor's munificence. He expended large sums upon national works; gave pensions to those senators who were not rich; encouraged poets, artists, and rhetoricians, by presents and allowances; and, while he was rigidly frugal in his personal gratification, he was liberal in public entertainments<sup>23</sup>.

The greater part of the reign of this able prince was peaceful and tranquil: but, as he did not begin to govern before he had reached an advanced age, his supremacy was not prolonged beyond the tenth year. He made a good use, however, of that period which was allowed for his sway, and re-established order and regularity. Some acts of sanguinary rigor occurred during his administra-

22 Sueton, cap. 8.

23 Xiphil. Hist.—Sueton. cap. 9, 17, 18.



tion ; but his general government was not that of a cruel prince. Helvidius Priscus, son-in-law of Thræsea, cherished that zeal for liberty which did not suit the servility of a degenerate nation ; and he ventured to treat the emperor with a degree of freedom, which was construed by the courtiers into a seditious spirit. By their advice, he was banished for having celebrated the anniversary of the birth of Brutus, and for other indications of republican zeal ; and a mandate was at length extorted for his death ; but the relenting emperor revoked it, yet not so expeditiously as to prevent the fatal stroke<sup>24</sup>. Another act of violence, which injured Vespasian's popularity, was that which was exercised upon Julius Sabinus. After a long concealment in a cave, he was discovered by some informers, who watched the movements of his wife from Rome to his miserable habitation ; and, being condemned as a traitor and a rebel, he suffered death. Even the fair partner of his tedious seclusion did not escape the vengeance of the court ; for it was deemed a sufficient favor to spare the lives of his two children<sup>25</sup>.

Soon after the death of Sabinus, a conspiracy was formed by Cæcina and the base informer Marcellus, who, although they were considered as the emperor's friends, resolved to murder or depose him ; but Titus, having detected the plot, invited the chief conspirator to an entertainment, and ordered him to be stabbed when he was retiring<sup>26</sup>, and, when the senate had pronounced against his accomplice a sentence of death, the unpitied delinquent committed suicide.

If any other subjects of Vespasian cherished hostile views or meditated treasonable acts, he avoided them by a natural demise, in the seventieth year of his  
 June 24, age. His firm and steady government was so beneficial to the state, that, if his life had depended upon

<sup>24</sup> Sueton. cap. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Xiphil. Hist.—Plutarchi Erot.

<sup>26</sup> Sueton. Vit. Titi, cap. 6.

the general wish, it would have been protracted to a much later period, particularly as Titus was suspected, not only of inordinate rapacity, but of profligate, debauchery and execrable cruelty.

However unfavorable was the opinion which the public had conceived of Titus, no opposition was made to his assumption of the supreme power ; and he immediately began to convince the nation, that he was not so depraved as he was supposed to be, and that, if he had occasionally been guilty of reprehensible and vicious acts, he intended to avoid such conduct in the whole course of his reign. He manifested great prudence and wisdom, temperance and moderation, courtesy and liberality, clemency and magnanimity ; and seemed to have no other aim than the promotion of public welfare and private happiness. When he had passed a whole day without the performance of some act of virtue, equity, or generosity, he said to his friends, "I have lost a day."

Tiberius had declared, that the Roman princes were not absolutely bound to confirm the grants of their predecessors : but Titus, by a gracious edict, established all imperial concessions and contributions, without the least solicitation from any of the citizens who were interested in the confirmation<sup>27</sup>. He increased the effect of this spontaneous act by such a variety of favors and grants, that his attendants took the liberty of animadverting upon his indulgence, as if the sources of his bounty would soon be dried up. He was not, however, so imprudent as to proceed to the extremity of profusion ; being aware of the contempt to which an indigent prince is exposed.

His liberality was accompanied with such a repugnance to cruelty, that he promised to keep his hands unstained with blood. He would rather lose his own life, he said, than take away the lives of others ; and, to secure his adherence to this humane declaration, he assumed the per-

27 Sueton.—Aurel. Vict. de Cæsariibus.

sonal exercise of the most pure and sacred office which the empire afforded,—the dignity of high-priest. He probably remembered, with sensations of remorse, the cruelties which he had perpetrated in Judæa, and which even the habitual brutality of the Romans in the practice of war could not excuse. When two patricians were accused of a treasonable conspiracy, he merely warned them to relinquish their seditious views, and would not suffer the senate to punish them (as the loyal assembly wished) with death: he even treated them with constant complacency and respect. To many other delinquents he was equally merciful; and no one, it is affirmed, suffered death in his reign<sup>28</sup>. But he did not extend his lenity to every species of offenders; for he stigmatised informers by public flagellation, and sold some as slaves, while others were banished to inhospitable islands.

His former intemperance and voluptuousness yielded to moderation of appetite and to moral decorum. He discarded the companions who had encouraged him in dissipation, and dismissed the princess Berenice, whom he had brought from Judæa, and to whom he had given hopes of an elevation from the disgrace of concubinage to the honor of matrimony. From a company of dancers, with whose performances he had frequently been delighted, he withdrew his patronage; but, while he discouraged effeminate amusements, he countenanced manly sports, and viewed the public games with apparent pleasure<sup>29</sup>.

It was the wish of the infamous Caligula, that some memorable calamity might occur to preserve his reign from oblivion; that a whole army might be destroyed by ferocious enemies, that famine might sweep off myriads from the face of the earth, that a pestilence might diffuse its ravages, an earthquake might make extraordinary havock, or a conflagration might involve the greatest city and its mass of population in indiscriminate ruin. If the tyrant

28 Xiphil. Hist.—Sueton. Vit. Titi, cap. 9.

29 Sueton. cap. 7.



had survived to the time of Titus, he would have been highly gratified; for, in the reign of this prince, whose wishes were of the most opposite complexion, some deplorable misfortunes excited general horror. An eruption of Mount Vesuvius, accompanied with alarming concussions of the earth, destroyed many considerable towns<sup>30</sup>, occasioned a great loss of lives, and ravaged a wide extent of country. While the emperor was employed in surveying the scene of ruin, a fire broke out in the metropolis; and, not ceasing before it had raged for three days, it made great havock. A pestilence, arising (in the opinion of an ancient historian<sup>31</sup>) from the diffusion of volcanic ashes over the country, or perhaps produced by a sudden intemperature of the air, added it's horrible devastations to the mischievous effects of the preceding calamities. Titus had recourse to many pious ceremonies, in the hope of appeasing that divine wrath which had chastised a sinful nation; and he exerted all the means which human art could furnish for the repression of the morbid contagion. He also gave directions for rebuilding or repairing those public structures which had been involved in the conflagration, and for the renovation of the towns which had felt the fury of the eruption; and he promoted these works by all the pecuniary aid that his revenue allowed him to bestow<sup>32</sup>.

After these misfortunes, the emperor called the attention of the citizens to a succession of splendid games, in consequence of the completion and dedication of a magnificent amphitheatre. The sports, amusements, and contests, were prolonged for three months; and, on some of the festive days, tickets were thrown among the crowd, entitling the individuals, into whose hands they fell, to a

30 Among these were Herculaneum and Pompeii. The ruins of the former city have been explored by repeated excavation, and accurately examined; and interesting discoveries have been made by the zeal of antiquaries. This town was not swallowed up by an earthquake, as was generally supposed, but was overwhelmed by a torrent of lava.

31 Dio Cassius.

32 Sueton. cap. 8.

present of some articles of food or of dress, a vase or cup of gold or silver, one or more slaves, horses, or cattle<sup>33</sup>.

Being exposed to the constant machinations of Domitian, who instigated the legions to a revolt, Titus was advised by his friends to take such measures as would effectually repress the dangerous ambition of an unprincipled brother: but he contented himself with mild expostulations, and would not even imprison or banish the profligate traitor. Perhaps, that forbearance which left the empire at the mercy of an inhuman tyrant, was the point to which he referred, when he said, upon his death-bed, that he only repented of one part of his conduct<sup>34</sup>. Whether he was poisoned by Domitian, or died of a fever, is un-  
Sept. 13, certain<sup>35</sup>: but he did not even complete the

81. third year of his reign. As his government was strongly marked with integrity, benevolence, and patriotism, his death excited general regret.

Domitian, who assumed the imperial dignity without opposition, did not immediately exhibit the odious features of tyranny. He affected such a repugnance to cruelty, as to express a wish for a discontinuance of the practice of sacrificing oxen. He pretended to be so disinterested, that, when estates or legacies were bequeathed to him by citizens who did not die childless, he refused to accept the donations. He remitted penalties, and did not exact all arrears of tribute. He attended with apparent zeal to the administration of justice: he reformed various abuses, and seemed inclined to emulate the admirable conduct of his brother. But he did not long pursue this laudable course, being more disposed to imitate the atrocities of Nero and Caligula, than to act as the father of his people.

33 Xiphil. Hist.

34 Sueton. cap. 10.—Xiphil.

35 Philostratus supports the former assertion, which is not discredited by the character of Domitian. Suetonius does not accuse that prince of so atrocious an act; but he admits, that the unfeeling brother, as if he wished to preclude all chance of recovery, ordered all the attendants to quit the apartment, before the emperor expired.

He commenced his series of cruelties with the murder of one of his relatives. A. D. 83. Flavius Sabinus, having given offence and excited jealousy by espousing the daughter of Titus, whose character Domitian malignantly aspersed, was put to death without even a pretence of criminality; and, from this time, the most distinguished citizens were exposed without defence to the insatiable rapacity and unrelenting rage of the new emperor. He encouraged informers to impute offences to the rich, that he might condemn them to death or exile, and seise their property. Even those who were apparently upon the most friendly terms with him, were suddenly accused of a violation of the law against treason, or of some other offence of which they were wholly unconscious, and fell victims to the most outrageous and diabolical tyranny<sup>36</sup>.

The same spirit of violence and injustice, which prompted him thus to act, induced him to attack a German nation. He furiously ravaged the territories of the Catti; but, when he found that they were advancing with a firm countenance to meet him, he retired from the invaded country. For this disgraceful expedition, he claimed the honor of a triumph, which the senate did not dare to with-hold.

While Domitian manifested an union of cowardice and cruelty, the military fame of Rome was maintained in Britain by the courage and ability of Agricola, who, having served with reputation under Suetonius Paulinus, had been appointed governor of the province by Vespasian. In his first campaign<sup>37</sup>, he completed the conquest of the country now called North-Wales, at a time when the season was so far advanced, that few either of his soldiers or of the Britons expected the achievement of any martial enterprise. To conciliate the provincials, and promote the subjection of their countrymen, he governed

<sup>36</sup> Sueton. Vit. Domitiani, cap. 10.—Xiphil.

<sup>37</sup> In the year 79.



with mildness and humanity ; studiously discountenanced all insults on the part of the Romans, and severely punished that military licentiousness, which, under former governors, had given to a state of peace the complexion of war. This politic conduct made a great impression upon various states, and accelerated their acknowledgement of the Roman supremacy. Yet the northern part of the island remained unsubdued ; for the spirited resistance of the Caledonians precluded their entire subjugation. In the prosecution of hostilities, the governor reached the frith of Tay, spreading terror by devastation, and erecting forts on commanding spots. Finding that the barbarians still declined a conflict, he passed another spring and summer in securing, by new works, the provinciated division of the island, connecting the friths of Clyde and Forth by a rampart and a number of forts. In a subsequent campaign, he approached the western coast of North-Britain, repelling every party of islanders that dared to attack him. In the following year, he advanced along the eastern coast in the hope of a general engagement, while a fleet attended his progress. Galgacus, the brave leader of the Caledonian host, watched every opportunity of assault. As soon as he found that the separation of his force had induced the Romans to march in three divisions, he re-assembled his battalions, and furiously attacked an imperfect legion, which he reduced to the verge of ruin. Alarmed at the danger of defeat, Agricola detached his light troops to the scene of conflict, and followed with the rest as quickly as possibility would allow. He thus saved the legion from extirpation, and routed the Caledonians with great slaughter<sup>38</sup>.

Dreading the loss of liberty as the greatest of evils, Galgacus and other chieftains promoted such an extension of the confederacy among the northern states, as swelled the amount of the British army beyond

A. D. 84.

30,000 men. A part of this force occupied a plain, while the greater portion appeared in gradual disposition upon a rising ground. The van-guard of the Romans consisted of British and other auxiliaries; and the legionaries composed the second line, ready to display all the vigor of exertion and all the superiority of skill and discipline, if the enemy should prevail over the former. The Caledonian missiles were more efficacious than those of their opponents, being discharged with such profusion as not to be easily avoided; but, in the close conflict which followed, they found their broad swords less operative than the pointed swords of the invaders. They then brought forward their war-chariots, without producing any other effect than a temporary disorder. When the battle became more general, and victory seemed to promise itself to the Romans, Galgacus ordered his rear-guard to wheel round, and fall upon the foe, who pursued his main body: but his politic antagonist, expecting such a *manœuvre*, sent off a strong party of cavalry, and baffled the scheme of the chieftain. The Caledonians were at length totally defeated, with the loss of about 10,000 of their number; but the victory was not decisive; and Domitian, jealous of the fame and glory of Agricola, extinguished, by a recall, his hopes of a complete subjugation of North-Britain<sup>39</sup>. A. D. 85.

It was pretended, that the emperor destined the government of Syria for Agricola; but he had no intention of rewarding the merit of that able general, whom he did not even thank for his services, when he re-appeared at Rome, and presented himself at the palace. When disasters subsequently occurred in various provinces, the public attention was repeatedly directed to the gallant officer, who had led the legions to victory among the Caledonian mountains. Domitian, however, disregarded the general

39 Tacit. Vit. Agric.

wish, and did not afford to Agricola any farther opportunity either of political or military exertion <sup>40</sup>.

Of the conduct of the legionaries in other provinces, during the reign of this prince, no details are extant. It appears that the Sarmatians made irruptions into the provincial territories, and that a legion, opposing the intruders without vigor, suffered a ruinous defeat. The emperor, who had so readily marched against an unoffending nation, could not, without exposing himself to the stigma of cowardice, refrain from taking the field for the chastisement of barbarian aggressors. He was not wholly unsuccessful in this expedition; for the Sarmatian hordes were repelled with loss: but he did not demand a triumph on his return, being content with offering a wreath of laurel, in the Capitol, to the majesty of Jupiter <sup>41</sup>.

The Dacians were not so easily checked. They were a warlike nation of Scythian origin, and occupied the country between the Danube and the Carpathian mountains.

A. D. 86. Invading the Mæsan province, which was governed by Oppius Sabinus, they slew him and routed his army, and seized the Danubian fortresses. The emperor hastened toward the scene of danger, as if he intended to encounter Decebalus, the Dacian king: but, not having the courage to meet the enemy, he ordered Cornelius Fuscus to undertake the hazardous employment. After a show of negotiation, the barbarian king, who had retired within his own frontiers, accepted the challenge of Fuscus to a general conflict. The Romans lost the honor of the day; and death or captivity became the fate of the greater part of their army <sup>42</sup>.

Domitian, who had returned to Rome to renew his bar-

<sup>40</sup> After living in unambitious privacy about eight years from the time of his recall, Agricola died, as is supposed, of poison, administered by the command of his ungrateful sovereign.

<sup>41</sup> Sueton. cap. 6.

<sup>42</sup> Jornand. de Rebus Geticis.—Sueton.



barities, again assumed an air of courage, and declared that he would take vengeance in person for this disgrace: but his pusillanimity confined him to a secure station, while his generals were combating with various success. He ventured, however, to take the field against the Quadi and Marcomanni; and, when they had baffled his assaults, he claimed the merit of a signal victory. With the Dacians he at length concluded a treaty, and even bound himself to the payment of an annual tribute<sup>43</sup>; yet he triumphed at Rome, as if he had met with the most splendid success.

When his tyranny had for many years been patiently endured, he was alarmed with the intelligence of a revolt. Lucius Antonius, who had the chief command between the Moselle and the Rhine, offended by the asperity of sarcasm, and disgusted at the oppressive

A. D. 88.

sway of the despot, made a bold attempt for the seizure of the supreme power. Some of the German chieftains promised to reinforce the two legions which he commanded: but fortune did not favor the enterprise; for Lucius Maximus, advancing to the Rhine with all the troops that he could hastily levy, fiercely attacked the insurgents; and, as the stream, being suddenly swollen, precluded the passage of the Germans, Antonius was defeated and slain. The victorious general, unwilling to expose, to the emperor's vengeance, all the citizens who favored the revolt, committed to the flames the papers of the unsuccessful commander<sup>44</sup>.

As this insurrection was so speedily quelled, and the principal delinquent had suffered for his temerity, the joy produced by the seasonable restoration of tranquillity might have been expected to operate in favor of clemency: but Domitian was not influenced by such feelings or considerations. He eagerly courted accusations against the abettors of the revolt; used various modes of torture, to

43 Xiphil. Hist.

44 Xiphil. Hist.—Sueton.

procure a disclosure of the names of all who were concerned in it; condemned some of the supposed offenders to banishment, and put a considerable number to death.

In every remaining year of his reign, additional cruelties were perpetrated; and, while he thus excited odium and propagated terror, he endeavoured to render himself popular by a multiplicity of public amusements and by occasional acts of liberality. He solemnised the secular games with great splendor, and instituted a quinquennial celebrity in honor of Jupiter. To gymnastic and equestrian trials of strength and skill, music, both vocal and instrumental, and contests in recitation and oratory, added their attractions. He presided at these spectacles with formal gravity, wearing a golden crown, upon which were the figures of Jove, Juno, and Minerva; and near him sat the priests, in whose coronets the emperor's image appeared; for, like Caligula, he ordered himself to be revered as a God.

His naval exhibitions were particularly admired. He formed a lake near the Tiber, surrounded it with buildings convenient for the purpose of survey, and entertained the citizens with sanguinary conflicts. His representations of legionary battles were also attractive; and his gladiatorial contests, in which he compelled women to engage, were viewed with great eagerness.

In building, he displayed all the prodigality of Nero. His public works were numerous and splendid; but, while he highly adorned and embellished Rome and other cities, he displeased the people by the severe exactions to which he was instigated by his architectural zeal and other propensities.

A thirst of blood continued to be his ruling passion. Among the citizens whom he doomed to death in the sequel of his reign, the most distinguished were Helvidius, Senecio, and Rusticus. Against the first, it was merely

alleged, that he had obliquely animadverted upon the emperor's divorce : the second had given offence by extolling the character of Priscus, the patriotic father of Helvidius ; and the third, who was a Stoic, had ventured to speak in praise of Thræsea, Nero's celebrated victim<sup>45</sup>. At the same time, all philosophers were banished from Italy, as teachers of unnecessary wisdom or of pernicious doctrines.

Vengeance at length overtook the flagitious oppressor. Even his own wife Domitia, whom he had again received after a divorce, conspired against him. She had discovered a secret catalogue of his intended victims ; and, perceiving a specification of her own name, resolved to put an end to that life which threatened so many with death. Domitilla, who had been banished for being favorably disposed to Christianity, and whose husband (the emperor's cousin) had been lately put to death, had a steward named Stephanus, who readily offered his service in the cause of tyrannicide. The chamberlain Parthenius eagerly promoted the scheme of violence, because his name appeared among the objects of displeasure or suspicion ; and, when he had introduced Stephanus on pretence of some important communication, this bold conspirator suddenly wounded Domitian, and some of his unsuspected associates completed, by additional blows, the deliverance of the empire. The exulting senate annulled the acts of the tyrant, consigned his name to infamy, and melted down the numerous statues of gold and silver which had betrayed the mean servility of his subjects.

Sept. 18.  
96.

45 Sueton. cap. 10.—Tacit. Vit. Agricola.



## LETTER XI.

*History of the Reigns of NERVA, TRAJAN, and HADRIAN.*

A. D. 96. THE imperial vacancy was quickly and worthily supplied. Cocceius Nerva, to whom a private offer of the sovereignty had repeatedly been made, was chosen emperor by the senate, with an unanimity which attested his merit; and the choice was confirmed, not only by the prætorian troops, but by the whole military body<sup>1</sup>.

As soon as the election of Nerva was announced, the terror which the tyranny of Domitian had diffused over the empire, was absorbed in a confident hope of the blessings of just and equitable government. The well-known character of the new emperor afforded a favorable presage of his views and intentions. Even those citizens who were most prone to suspicion, did not apprehend that he would relinquish his former moderation and propriety of conduct, and become a tyrant or an oppressor; or, if they did not think that every species of tyranny would cease, they were at least confident that it would not be carried to a flagitious excess, or to the height of atrocious enormity.

Nerva commenced his reign with a release of all prisoners who had been accused of treason, a recall of exiles, and a restitution of confiscated property. He, at the same time, exercised all the rigors of justice upon slaves who had injured their masters by false accusations, and upon freedmen who had treated their patrons with the like baseness and ingratitude. He ordered that none should presume

<sup>1</sup> The grandfather of Nerva, a descendant of a Cretan family, had discharged the consulate with reputation, and enjoyed the favor of Tiberius: but, in a moment of dejection, deploring the miseries of his country, he put an end to his own life. The emperor's father was also a distinguished citizen of consular rank; and Nerva himself, while he acted as prætor, acquired the good opinion of Nero, and (what he more highly valued) the approbation of the public.

to accuse others of a violation of the imperial majesty, or of an adoption of the Christian system<sup>2</sup>. Shocked at the murderous havock which Nero and Domitian had made among the senators, he swore that no possessor of that dignity should suffer death by his order; and he did not forget or contravene his oath, when he found that one of the conscript fathers had traitorously conspired against his life. As this instance of impolitic clemency exposed him to censure, he subsequently showed a less degree of that forbearance which could only provoke insult and encourage sedition.

He particularly distinguished himself by disinterestedness and liberality. He introduced a strict œconomy into the public expenditure, that he might be enabled to distribute pecuniary favors among meritorious citizens. He sold, for the same beneficent purpose, a considerable part of the imperial property, both real and personal. To the learned he was a kind patron: he encouraged arts and industry: he protected all useful establishments. A prince more humanely liberal was unknown in the annals of Rome. Other emperors had given more; but prodigality is not true generosity.

He administered justice with zeal, and decided causes with ability. In concert with intelligent and experienced counsellors (for, without such advice, he made no important regulations), he enacted beneficial laws and ordinances, and guided in peace the political machine. But, while he promoted the general happiness of his people, the provincials, in consequence of his facility of temper, were exposed to the rapacity and tyranny of the governors and their subordinate officers.

In the choice of consuls, he manifested great judgement. He named Virginius Rufus for his associate in this dignity, and, on the death of that

A. D. 97.

respectable patrician, to whom the supremacy of the state had been frequently offered, he honored himself by selecting the historian Tacitus for his colleague. But neither his high character, nor the wisdom and spirit of his counsellors, could sufficiently over-awe the prætorian troops. Casperius, commander of the licentious cohorts, insisted upon the exemplary punishment of every one who had been concerned in the murder of Domitian, in a tone so loud and peremptory, that Nerva was intimidated into a temporary illness: yet he firmly resisted the haughty demand, and declared that he would rather lose his own life, than consent to the death of those who, having freed the world from an odious tyrant, had raised him to the highest authority. The mutinous soldiers, without waiting for his mandate, put to death some of the tyrannicides; and the menaces of Casperius constrained the emperor to thank the troops for having properly punished the most flagitious of all delinquents<sup>3</sup>.

This audacious insult made such an impression on the mind of Nerva, that he resolved to maintain his dignity by the association of an esteemed warrior, who had spirit to defend the throne, and virtue to govern well. Ulpian Trajan, a Spaniard, was the object of his adoptive choice<sup>4</sup>; and the appointment had a speedy effect in reclaiming the soldiery to due subordination and obedience<sup>5</sup>.

Trajan was then governor of Lower Germany; and, not being destitute of ambition, he readily accepted the offered honor. He did not, however, quit his station; being

3 Aurel. Vict. de Vit. Imperat. cap.12.—Xiphil.

4 In the letter which he addressed to Trajan, announcing his election, he quoted a line of Homer, indignantly expressing a wish, that those who had insulted and injured him might suffer for his sorrows by the spirit and the weapons of his friend: *Τισιαν Δαναοί εμα δακρυα σοιςι βελισσιν*.

5 His successor contented himself with cashiering the offenders, unless we interpret the words of Xiphilin, *επιποδων επιμισατο*, as implying a removal from the world;—a signification which some have annexed to it, as well as to the ambiguous Latin phrase, *è medio sustulit*.



probably of opinion, that his name and influence would operate effectually in favor of the aged emperor. Satisfied with his own conduct, Nerva passed the short remainder of his reign in tranquillity. His death was accelerated by a fit of anger. After the effusion of acrimonious reproaches against a notorious informer, his feeble frame was so disordered by his agitation, that a fever ensued, which proved fatal<sup>6</sup>. He was in the sixty-sixth year of Jan. 27, his age; and, if he had not relinquished the ease 98. of a private station, his life would perhaps have been prolonged. His desire of governing arose solely from a wish of benefiting mankind; and, if he had been endowed with that firmness of character and vigor of mind which sovereignty requires, he would have been an excellent and admirable prince.

Trajan undertook the task of government with the general consent of the senate, the army, the citizens, and the provincials; and he increased his popularity by declaring, in an epistle to the senate, that he would never inflict death or disgrace upon a man of honor or of worth;—a declaration which he confirmed by an oath. He immediately began to emulate the liberality of Nerva; ordered distributions of corn and money; and provided funds for defraying the charges of educating the children of the poor. He listened to the applications and complaints of the meanest of his subjects, and seemed desirous of acting as their father and their friend, rather than as their domineering master. He discountenanced all officers who had abused their authority, and either dismissed them from their employments, or enforced their future good behaviour.

After a long and seemingly unnecessary continuance in Germany, he returned to Rome, A. D. 99. and was received with every mark of joy by the citizens of all ranks. He gratified the people with donatives and

games, and took prudent precautions for securing constant supplies of corn and other articles of subsistence. He regulated the administration of justice, attended to the preservation of order, patronised the arts, and rewarded modest merit. Being re-chosen consul, he publicly declared, that he would observe the laws with the same strictness and scrupulosity which he had evinced in his private capacity, and desired, that the solemn wishes, annually expressed for his health and happiness, might be qualified by a proviso of his just and legal government<sup>7</sup>. Consistently with this honorable intimation, he said to a prætorian commander, "Employ in my defence the sword " which I now deliver to you ; but, if I neglect my duty, " or act like a tyrant, turn the fatal weapon against me<sup>8</sup>."

Notwithstanding the general moderation of his government, Trajan was inspired with an ardent thirst of martial fame, and actuated by a strong desire of extending the limits of the empire. The conduct of the Dacians furnished him with a pretence for hostilities. Their king had insulted the majesty of Rome by the exaction of a tribute ; and some of their tribes had dared to make incursions into the Roman territories. More intent upon conquest than desirous of negotiating an accommodation,

A. D. the emperor made preparations for a vigorous  
101. war. He passed the Danube, unopposed by the Dacians, who did not expect so speedy an invasion. Their lands were furiously ravaged ; but neither Decebalus nor his people were effectually intimidated by that mode of hostility. The majority of the Dacian youth eagerly took arms to repel the invaders ; and a fierce conflict ensued, in which the infantry of the Romans and their auxiliaries were at first unsuccessful ; but, being opportunely aided by the cavalry, they routed the barbarians with great slaughter. Having burned the camp of the enemy, Trajan

resumed his march with alacrity, and directed his course toward the Dacian capital. Humbled by defeat, the king sent deputies to intimate a desire of peace; but the emperor's terms were considered as too unreasonable to be accepted. When the invaders, after the reduction of several fortresses, approached a considerable town, the male inhabitants killed all their cattle, and rushed forward with an air of desperation to meet the enemy. The conflict, being successful on the part of Trajan, was followed by the destruction of the plundered town. A body of Sarmatians, soon after, joined Decebalus, who was encouraged to blockade a town which the Romans had taken, but could not with all his vigilance prevent it from being relieved by the personal activity of the emperor<sup>9</sup>.

In the progress of invasion, another conflict arose, in which the Dacians and their confederates severely felt the vigor of the Roman arms. They renewed their efforts for the expulsion of the intruders; but, being again routed, Decebalus relinquished the contest. He submitted to the requisitions of Trajan, and consented to give up his arms and engines, and even to surrender the artisans by whom they had been fabricated, as well as all deserters; to destroy his fortresses, restore the districts which he had seized, and form a close alliance with the Romans<sup>10</sup>;—in other words, to be subservient to their will both in politics and in war. Presenting himself in the camp, he on his knees did homage to the emperor, whose hand he kissed with vows of obedience. His principal officers followed his example; and his envoys, repairing to Rome, concurred with the senate in the ratification of the treaty.

The return of the victorious prince to the metropolis was marked with triumphal honors: gladiatorial contests were exhibited; splendid spectacles and theatrical

9 Hist. Belli Dacici, à Trajano gesti, ex Simulacris quæ in Columnâ ejusdem Romæ visuntur collecta, Auctore F. Alionso Ciacono Hispano,—p. 19—22.

10 Xiphil. Hist.



entertainments enlivened the scene. After these ceremonies and amusements, the emperor eagerly renewed his application to political and judicial concerns; and, for several years, his military ardor seemed to be absorbed in the zeal of a pacific prince.

Roused from peaceful pursuits by his own ambition, or by the movements of Decebalus, who was accused, by

A. D. public report, of malevolent and hostile intentions,<sup>104.</sup> he desired the senate to stigmatise the barbarian king as an enemy of Rome, and hastened to the

banks of the Danube, to prepare for a renewal of the war; but he did not immediately invade Dacia, contenting himself with the erection of a bridge over the deep and rapid stream,—a work which was executed by Apollodorus, upon a seemingly-infirm foundation, with such skill, as to excite general admiration. In the following spring, he

entered the country which he intended to sub-  
due;<sup>105.</sup> and, refusing to listen to overtures of peace,

with which Decebalus hoped to stop the progress of the invading army, he prosecuted his march with alacrity. He encountered the hostile force with advantage; but the courage of the Dacians would not suffer a single battle to decide the renovated contest. They repeatedly defied the imperial power, and displayed a spirit which extorted the applause of their adversaries. A despair of success, however, at length paralysed their exertions; and their sovereign, being deprived of his capital and his whole territory, avoided by suicide the disgrace of captivity. He had concealed his treasures; but, by the information of one of his confidential friends, the victors were enabled to discover and secure those valuable spoils<sup>11</sup>.

The provincial settlement of the conquered country was the next object of Trajan's attention. He erected forts and towns in the most convenient stations, sent a multi-

tude of families to colonise the province, and gave a regular form to the administration. He was so elate with his success, that he gratified the citizens of Rome with sumptuous entertainments and a variety of games and exhibitions. Joy and festivity reigned for one hundred and twenty-three days. It might have been supposed, that, in a tenth part of the time, the people would have been weary of diversions; but the Romans were extravagantly fond of public sports and amusements.

In the interval of peace which followed this important success, Trajan employed himself in all the pursuits which tended to national benefit. He enacted useful laws, checked the baseness of false accusation, distributed impartial justice, encouraged learning and merit, and adorned Rome and many provincial towns with splendid works of art. But, from the general excellence of his government, a strong exception must be made; for, after having suffered the Christians to remain in a great measure unmolested during eight years of his reign, he became a violent persecutor of their fraternity. His pagan bigotry was disgusted at the propagation of their religion; and he affected to apprehend danger from the increase of their societies, as if their consultations were pregnant with sedition. Some distinguished prelates, and many inferior votaries of divine truth, suffered death under his sway. While he resided at Antioch, he made such inquiries as tended to inspire him with less unfavorable ideas of their character and conduct, and therefore ordered that no governor or magistrate should proceed against them *ex officio*, but that, if any of their number should be accused upon legal information, they should be punished<sup>12</sup>. This rescript allayed the persecution, but did not restore that security which they had enjoyed under the administration of Nerva.

12 Plinii Epist. lib. x. 98.

Not content with the advantages of peace, Trajan was induced to engage in another war. He wished to humble the Parthians, whose fame and power, he thought, would give dignity to his eventual success. Being informed that Cosrhoes, their sovereign, had presented a king to the Armenians in the person of Exedares, he considered this act as an insult to the majesty of Rome, and a derogation from his superior right of choice; and declared that he would conduct his legions to the Euphrates and the Tigris, if such arrogant pretensions should not be speedily relinquished. Intimidated by this menace, and not finding the Parthians disposed to favor him, Exedares resigned the crown; and Cosrhoes, in a tone of moderation, requested that the emperor would grant it to Parthamasiris. This candidate not only urged the same request in a letter to Trajan, but personally solicited the high appointment, when the legionaries had invaded Armenia. The facility with which some of the towns of that realm were captured, encouraged Trajan to reject the application, in the hope of securing the whole territory. He

A. D. baffled all the attempts of Parthamasiris; and,  
108. seizing the kingdom, reduced it to provincial subjection<sup>13</sup>.

Dreading a visit from the Romans, the kings of Iberia, Colchis, and Bosphorus, courted the emperor's favor by submission. The people of Albania received a king whom he recommended to their choice; and some of the Sarmatian communities acknowledged his supremacy. When he reached Edessa, he received presents and homage from the ruler of the principality. He invaded Adiabene

A. D. with success; attacked the Parthians with vigor;  
109. and, after a series of exploits, which are not recorded in extant histories, he constrained Cosrhoes to sue for peace. He acceded to the king's solicitations; and,



demanding hostages for his subserviency, suffered him to retain his crown.

When the Parthian king had suppressed or allayed those intestine dissensions which had facilitated the progress of the Romans, he expelled the garrisons which they had left at Nisibis and other towns, and resumed his independent dignity. Encamping near the Tigris, he awaited, with a firm countenance, the arrival of a Roman A. D.  
army. As soon as Trajan was informed of these 114.  
movements, he sent troops to check the enemy; and, in a personal expedition, repelled the Parthian monarch, and subdued the whole kingdom of Adiabene. Returning to Antioch after his campaign, he was meditating greater enterprises, when a violent earthquake diffused calamity through that town and over the adjacent country. A subterraneous noise announced the volcanic explosion. As the greater part of the city yielded to the shock, the consul Pedo and many thousands of the inhabitants, beside a multitude of strangers, perished amidst the ruins. The emperor with difficulty escaped into the open country, where he and the rest of the survivors long remained in tents. He eagerly administered consolation to the afflicted people, and provided with anxious zeal for the restoration of the city<sup>14</sup>.

Renewing the war in the spring, Trajan gained A. D.  
possession of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, but did 115.  
not achieve the conquest of the Parthian realm. Having ordered a *flotilla*, which he had built upon the Euphrates, to be conveyed by land to the Tigris, he sailed into the Persian gulph, and seemed desirous of emulating Alexander in an expedition to India. But he was checked by his advanced age, and by the consideration of the insufficient establishment of his power between the Caspian sea and the southern extremity of Persia.

In this expedition, he probably subdued a part of the coast of Arabia Felix. One of his officers had, many years before, invaded Arabia Petræa with success : but there is no satisfactory authority for the assertion, that he provincialized the whole country, between the Persian gulph and the Red Sea. It appears, however, that he reduced Armenia, Mesopotamia, and Assyria, into the form of provinces<sup>15</sup>.

From a wish for the recovery of independence, rather  
 A. D. than in consequence of any peculiar severity on  
 116. the part of the government, the Jews took arms in various parts of the empire, considering the unsettled state of the new provinces as highly favorable to their views. A numerous body marched from the Cyrenaic territory into Egypt ; and, being joined by their discontented brethren, committed horrible cruelties. At Alexandria, their execrable outrages excited such a fury of indignation, that the inhabitants, with the aid of those provincials whom the critical emergency had drawn to the capital, massacred all the Jews within it's circuit. Marcius Turbo advanced against the revoltors with all the troops that he could collect ; repeatedly brought them to action ; and slew the greater part of their number<sup>16</sup>. In Cyprus, an insurrection raged with equal violence, and with such remorseless inhumanity, that the very idea and name of a Jew produced, among the islanders, sensations of extreme horror ; and, when the revolt had been suppressed by the death of all the insurgents and their families, it was ordered that every Israelite who should presume to land upon the island should be instantly put to death<sup>17</sup>. The Jews of Mesopotamia also rose in arms : but they were soon chastised by military execution, or expelled from the province. In the same country ; the general disaffection of the provincials to the Roman government hurried them

<sup>15</sup> Eutrop. lib. viii. cap. 3.—Euseb. Chron.

<sup>16</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. cap. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

into acts of sedition and revolt. Maximus, being sent to reclaim them, lost his life in battle: but Quietus, a more distinguished officer, was less unfortunate. He re-took Nisibis and other strong towns; and, after various advantages, he restored exterior tranquillity.

To secure the forbearance of the Parthians, Trajan made his appearance in the vicinity of their capital, with a force which they did not venture to resist; and, placing himself upon a throne, presented the crown to a native nobleman, in whose nomination the over-awed people acquiesced, neglecting the pretensions of Cosrhoes, who had long filled their throne.

The siege of Atræ was the last military act of Trajan's life. In this enterprise he did not meet with his usual success; and his ill state of health induced him to prepare for his return to Italy. He did not live to re-visit August 11, Rome; for he died in Cilicia, greatly lamented. 117.

Few princes have received higher praise than Trajan; and the compliment paid to his character by the senate, in the acclamations with which some of his imperial successors were honored<sup>18</sup>, will not be forgotten by the readers of the Roman history. It must be allowed, that he was, in his general conduct, one of the best and greatest princes that ever promoted the welfare and prosperity of a nation; that he was usually moderate in the exercise of that power which he might with impunity have abused; that he seemed to detest all injustice; was courteous, beneficent, and liberal: but an impartial historian will feel himself bound to add, that this prince was not so just or so humane as to reject the call of murderous ambition, or to dismiss with magnanimous contempt the extravagant wish of extending the bounds of an overgrown empire; that he was a bigoted persecutor of a pious and inoffensive community; and that his private character was de-

<sup>18</sup> "May you prove more fortunate than Augustus, and a better prince than Trajan!"



graded by intemperance, and debased by the most unnatural propensities.

It does not appear that Trajan adopted Hadrian as his successor<sup>19</sup>. He probably considered the character of his relative as too capricious and unsteady for the functions of just and regular government : but Plotina, having conceived a more favorable opinion of him, concealed the emperor's death for some days, and in that interval performed the ceremony of adoption, as if it had been ordered and sanctioned by her husband. The troops readily acquiesced in the supposed will of an esteemed prince ; and Hadrian, being proclaimed emperor in the camp, requested the senate to acknowledge his title. The request was deemed equivalent to a command, and was consequently granted with little hesitation.

Hadrian gave an early display of his moderation, with regard to war and conquest. He relinquished all the territories which the Romans had seized beyond the Euphrates, considering the empire as sufficiently large without such extension<sup>20</sup>. He permitted the Parthians to reinstate that prince whom Trajan had expelled from their throne, and abstained from all interference in the choice of an Armenian king. Returning to Rome, he was com-

A. D. 118. plimented with the offer of a triumph for his participation in the success of the late emperor ; but he declined the honor, and ordered it to be paid to the image of his illustrious predecessor. He also refused the appellation of father of his country, alleging that he ought first to deserve it. He increased the allowance for the education of poor children ; diminished the weight of taxa-

19 Xiphilin, in the name of Dio, whose father had an opportunity of knowing the truth, peremptorily denies the alleged adoption, on the part of Trajan ; and Eutropius also attributes it to the artifice of Plotina.

The ancestors of Hadrian, according to his own account, were inhabitants of the Picentine territory ; whence one of the family emigrated into Spain ; but it is affirmed by Spartian, that he was born at Rome, not (as Eutropius says) at Italica, or *Alcalá del Rio*.

20 Eutrop. lib. viii. cap. 6.

tion; remitted all arrears due to the government from the inhabitants of Italy, and gave up a considerable part of the provincial debts. These gracious acts were loudly applauded; and Hadrian's generosity allayed the regret for the loss of Trajan.

An invasion of Illyria called the emperor from his peaceful pursuits, and drew him into Mœsia, A. D. where he attacked the retreating army of Sarma- 119. tians and Roxolani, and, by his success in the field, intimidated them into negotiatory submission<sup>21</sup>. Amidst the gratification which his vanity derived from the exploits of the campaign, he gave way to the meanness of jealousy, and, in a letter to the senate, accused Lusius and three other respectable citizens (the friends of Trajan) of ambitious and traitorous views. The servile assembly, without proof of their guilt, sacrificed them to the fears of Hadrian; and the base dissembler, on his re-appearance at Rome, swore that he had not commanded their death<sup>22</sup>; but even this oath did not remove the suspicion of his wanton inhumanity. To mitigate the rising odium, he indulged the people with an extraordinary donative, and with splendid games; and affected a great zeal for the welfare and happiness of his subjects.

He passed the greater part of his reign in a general survey of his extensive dominions. He commenced his travels by a journey into Gaul, where he minute- A. D. ly investigated the state of the country, relieved 120. the poor, corrected abuses, and ably presided in the seat of justice. In Germany, he paid an uncommon degree of attention to the military establishment, and left it upon such a basis as evinced his reformatory judgement.

Britain was the next object of his personal care. He found the provincials of that island in a state of insecurity and alarm; ill-governed by the imperial officers, and

21 Spart. Vit. Hadriani.

22 Xiphil. Hist.

harassed by the fierce Caledonians. He neither ventured

A. D. to attack the barbarians, nor condescended to  
 121. conclude a treaty with them. Abandoning the whole country between the Forth and the Tyne, the Clyde and the frith of Solway, he raised an earthen rampart across the island to secure the contracted limits of the province. He afterward visited Spain, where he presided in a general assembly of the national representatives, and made new arrangements, both civil and military. Greece was, at various times, honored with his presence; and the Athenians, in particular, received marks of his favor and regard. The Asiatic and African provinces were not neglected by imperial curiosity and vigilance; and, in his varied progress, he was more conciliatory than arrogant, more beneficent than mischievous, more equitable than unjust.

While he was in Asia, he manifested his moderation in avoiding a war, into which the Parthians seemed ready to

A. D. rush. In a conference with their king, he spoke  
 123. so plausibly and persuasively in favor of peace, that all hostile intentions were relinquished<sup>21</sup>. In another visit to Asia, he called a council of princes, whom he in-

A. D. terested by his eloquence, instructed by his wis-  
 130. dom, and gratified by his bounty. The king of Iberia, and his Albanian neighbour, who did not attend the meeting, were induced to lament the disregard with which they treated the invitation of a prince whose power was so formidable, and whose abilities were so admired.

In the Egyptian province the emperor's stay was protracted beyond two years. He regulated the administration of the country; improved the discipline of the army; and restored to the people of Alexandria their ancient privileges, although he was disgusted at their censorious humor and insubmissive spirit. He seemed to be popular



while he continued among them : but, after his departure, they freely satirised his favorites<sup>24</sup>, and ridiculed his character and conduct.

After a long residence in Syria, he returned to Europe; and, while he kept his court at Athens, a revolt A. D. 133. of the Jews occurred, which, however, did not draw him into the field. He had re-built and colonised Jerusalem, under the name of *Ælia Capitolina*; had profaned, by the erection of a pagan temple, the spot which was venerated both by Jews and Christians; and had issued an ordinance against circumcision. Incensed at his impious presumption, the Israelites took arms with determined eagerness, under the conduct of Barcochebas, who inspired them with the hope of recovering their independence. They gave him the title of king; and, flocking to his standard from all parts of Palestine, they ravaged the provincial districts, massacred many of the loyal subjects of Hadrian, and particularly vented their malignant rage upon the Christians<sup>25</sup>. The legionaries, not having an opportunity of a general action, cut off detached parties of the insurgents, and put to death even the women who favored the cause of rebellion. Julius Severus, being summoned from Britain to assume the command in Judæa, incessantly harassed the rebels in skirmishes, deprived them of the facilities of supply, and at length suppressed A. D. 135. the revolt. A great loss of lives gave a dreadful aspect to the war; for it is affirmed, that, beside a considerable loss of legionary combatants, 580,000 of the Jews and their associates fell in different conflicts, and that an additional multitude perished by famine, disease, and

<sup>24</sup> His chief minion was Antinous, whom he loved with an unjustifiable excess of passion. This admired youth was drowned by accident in the Nile; or (as was more generally supposed) was put to death, at his own desire, to gratify his superstitious master, who had been taught to believe, that the offer of one of his friends, as a victim to the infernal deities, would be the means of prolonging his own life. Temples were erected in honor of the favorite; and the forms of devotion were lavished upon this unworthy object.

<sup>25</sup> Eusebii Hist. Eccles. lib. iv. cap. 6.

fire<sup>26</sup>. The calculation is, obviously, far beyond the probable truth; but we may easily believe that the war was very destructive.

In a different part of Asia, the provincials were involved in hostilities with the Alani (a Scythian nation), who, marching from the vicinity of the Caspian sea, invaded Media and Armenia, and extended their ravages into Cappadocia. This war was of very short duration; for the barbarians hastily retreated, on the approach of a legionary force, and were not encouraged to renew their incursions.

These commotions did not seem to the emperor to require his personal interference. He was, indeed, rather pacific than warlike, less from a principle of humanity, than from not feeling the *stimulus* of military ambition. He did not think it necessary to employ his legions in war, for the mere purpose of acquiring fame or extending his dominion: but kept them for the defence of the empire.

When he found his health declining, as he advanced in years, he turned his attention to the choice of a successor. The difficulty of fixing perplexed him; and, after he had

A. D. selected Lucius Verus<sup>27</sup>, he was far from being  
 136. satisfied with his choice. He did not, however, object to the dissolute habits of Verus, so much as to the weakness of his constitution; and he particularly lamented, that he had assigned the succession to one who, in all probability, could not live to enjoy it<sup>28</sup>. The adopted prince governed Pannonia without disgrace; but he did not display that high ability which might have been expected from an object of imperial selection.

Servianus, a respectable senator, whom Trajan had pronounced worthy of the imperial dignity, and to whom

<sup>26</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

<sup>27</sup> This citizen was the descendant of a respectable Etrurian family, which had furnished Rome with several consular magistrates.

<sup>28</sup> Spart. Vit. Elii Veri.

Hadrian had given his sister in marriage, ventured to express his disapprobation of the appointment of Verus; and, on pretence of disaffection, he was, at the age of ninety years, sacrificed to the inhuman jealousy of the despot. Fuscus, a youthful relative of the emperor, was for the same reason put to death<sup>29</sup>. These and other murders were palliated, in the opinion of the courtiers, by the irritability arising from Hadrian's ill state of health, and by the expediency of checking all approaches to sedition: but the people in general entertained a less favorable opinion of the conduct of their arbitrary sovereign.

After the death of Verus, Hadrian made a better choice of a successor. Titus Aurelius Antoninus, the son and grandson of citizens who had enjoyed the consulate, deserved and obtained the honorable distinction. He was, at the same time, required by his patron to adopt two patricians: one was Marcus Annius, son of his brother-in-law; the other was a son of Verus. When he had complied with this proviso, which was stated to be indispensable, he was dignified with the title of Cæsar, and declared the colleague of Hadrian. He presided at Rome, when the emperor, reduced to a dangerous state by an hydropic disorder, had retired to Baiæ. The enfeebled prince, harassed by pain, endeavoured to destroy himself, and frequently desired his attendants to gratify him in that respect; but they thought it their duty to disobey such orders. A physician, being earnestly requested to give poison rather than medicine to his unhappy patient, refused to comply, and was so deeply affected, that he stabbed himself in the palace<sup>30</sup>. At length, by disregarding all medical directions, and indulging himself in pernicious irregularities of diet, he hastened his dissolution<sup>31</sup>. Not long before he expired, he gave orders for July 10, the death of many persons of distinction; but A. D. 136.

29 Xiphil. Hist.

30 Spart. Vit. Hadriani.

31 Xiphil. Hist.



Antoninus saved them from the fury of the dying prince; and, when the senate refused to vote divine honors to the perpetrator of unprovoked murders, he produced the persons whom he had concealed, and overpowered all objections by his influence and authority. Principally for this reason, he was complimented by the assembly with the title of the *pious* emperor, which his modesty did not reject.

Hadrian united the attainments of the scholar, the votary of science, and the artist, with a fund of political wisdom<sup>32</sup>. He enacted good laws, and, in his *perpetual edict*, framed a body of jurisprudence from the published adjudications of the prætors, which he improved by his own judgement and the suggestions of his counsellors. He attended with diligence to every part of the administration. If his virtue and humanity had been equal to his abilities, he would have been one of the best princes that ever reigned; and, with all his faults, no one can justly reckon him among the worst.

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## LETTER XII.

*The Roman History, continued to the Death of MARCUS AURELIUS, usually styled the Philosopher.*

A. D. 138. BY the adoption of Antoninus Pius, Hadrian effectually provided for the good government of the state. The new emperor was not only well qualified

<sup>32</sup> But he could not be (as a compiler of universal history pretends) "the best orator, poet, grammarian, philosopher, and mathematician, of his time; thoroughly skilled in physic; in drawing and painting, equal to the greatest masters; and the most skilful musician of the age." There is no authority for attributing to him this *superlative* union of varied excellencies; and such exaggeration is absurd and ridiculous.

for the discharge of political functions, but was disposed to act the part of a mild and beneficent prince. Wisdom, virtue, and humanity, were united in his character.

It is to be lamented, that the records of his reign are so scanty and imperfect. A curious reader would wish to acquire a perfect knowledge of the administration of a prince, whose conduct may be deemed an excellent model for the rulers of nations: but he will be disappointed on this occasion, and must be content with mere hints and desultory communications. In the history of a long reign, he will find few incidents, and meet with no satisfactory details.

Antoninus, after his elevation, showed the same unaffected modesty which he had evinced in private life. His demeanour was courteous; his manners were respectful and polite to the higher class; and, to plebeians and even to slaves, he was mild and affable. His liberality was manifested in the distribution of the greater part of his ample property among those citizens who had not been favored with the gifts of fortune; and, when his wife expressed her surprise at such profuseness of donation, he replied, that a sovereign ought to divest himself of all private interests and property, and throw his wealth into the public stock<sup>1</sup>. Faustina was obliged to acquiesce in the answer, without having a due sense of it's propriety and force.

In the provincial governments and high offices he made few changes, being disposed to admit the general rectitude of Hadrian's choice; and, when he filled a vacancy, merit was his sole object of regard. He taught his officers, by his own example, to discharge their functions with patriotic zeal. He diminished the imposts; ordered them to be collected without oppressive rigor; and compensated the defalcation by avoiding a wanton extravagance of ex-

1 Jul. Capitol. Vit. Antonini Pii.

penditure. He administered justice with general impartiality, but not without some exceptions; for he was too partial to the senatorial order, in not inflicting, upon delinquents of that rank, the capital punishment to which, for the same offence, other citizens were doomed. To war he was a professed enemy: it appeared to him to deserve the strong censure of the poet<sup>2</sup>, being a compound of madness and impiety. Yet some hostilities occurred in his reign, in various parts of the empire. In Britain,

A. D. the proprætor Lollius quelled a revolt of the Bri-  
 144. gantes; recovered the territories between Hadrian's rampart and the northernmost forts of Agricola; and, having erected a new barrier from the Forth to the Clyde, procured for his imperial master the appellation of Britannicus. Commotions also arose in Germany; but they were transient; and an insurrection in Dacia was

A. D. suppressed with equal facility. A part of Greece  
 146. was also disturbed by the machinations of seditious citizens. The Alani repeatedly put themselves in motion for war, without making any serious impression upon the neighbouring provinces<sup>3</sup>. In Egypt, some disturbances alarmed, for a short time, the well-disposed portion of the community; and many of the Mauritanian

A. D. tribes rose in arms against the Roman govern-  
 148. ment; but they were chastised by legionary vigor, and driven into the deserts near Mount Atlas<sup>4</sup>.

Being convinced of the loyalty, and acquainted with the abilities, of the governors whom he employed, Antoninus did not leave Italy in consequence of any of these alarms. He remained either in the metropolis, or at no great distance from it, attending to the whole detail of government, enjoying the society of his friends, and par-

<sup>2</sup> *Secelerata insania belli.* Virg.

<sup>3</sup> Jul. Capitol.

<sup>4</sup> Pausan. lib. viii — He represents these aggressors as wandering barbarians, removing themselves and their families from one place to another on horseback, not like the Asiatic nomades in waggons.



taking of theatrical amusements. He occasionally diverted himself with fishing, and frequently with the chase. Invitations to the entertainments of private citizens he readily accepted; and, if his rank and character did not always repress the rudeness of familiarity, he bore with philosophic patience even disrespectful and illiberal remarks<sup>5</sup>.

Under the sway of a prince so humane and benevolent, the Christians expected a respite from persecution. They were harassed in some provinces, however, and exposed by the existing laws to insult and outrage. At length the emperor, influenced by that masterly defence of their character and conduct, which an illustrious convert<sup>6</sup> presented to him, interposed in their favor. He expressly prohibited all molestation of those objects of unjust odium, or the adduction of any charge against them, drawn from their religious principles and practices<sup>7</sup>.

So high was the reputation of this prince for wisdom, and such was the reverence excited by his virtue, that many foreign princes solicited his friendship, his advice and arbitration. Some German and Asiatic states consented to be governed by princes whom he recommended to their choice. The Parthian king, who had levied an army for the invasion of Armenia, relinquished his ambitious views, as soon as he had received from Antoninus a letter of expostulation. These external testimonies of respect tended to confirm and augment the regard which was justly entertained for him by the subjects of Rome<sup>8</sup>.

Although he was capable of governing by his own good sense and knowledge, he did not promulgate any important ordinance without the advice of able senators or judicious friends. He occasionally gratified the people with an ac-

5 Jul. Capitol.

6 Justin the Martyr, who was sacrificed to pagan bigotry in the succeeding reign.

7 Euseb. lib. iv.

8 Aurel. Vict. de Moribus Imperat. cap. 15.—Jul. Capitol.—Eutrop.

count of his administration, as if he thought himself responsible for his acts. By the rules of political equity, he was certainly accountable for his conduct; but his imperial predecessors were not disposed to countenance such an opinion.

Casual misfortunes furnished him with opportunities of evincing his patriotism and philanthropy. The damages occasioned by an earthquake at Rhodes, and in the Lycian and Carian provinces, were in a great measure compensated by his unsolicited liberality: the mischievous effects of an inundation of the Tiber, and of fires at Rome and other cities, were repaired by his bounty, as far as they could be remedied by pecuniary grants; and a dreadful famine in the metropolis called forth his most anxious attention to the means of supplying the urgent wants of the citizens<sup>9</sup>.

He also exercised his liberality, where it was less requisite, in spectacles and games; and, in particular, he celebrated with great pomp the completion of nine  
A. D. 147. centuries from the foundation of Rome<sup>10</sup>. On this occasion, he probably traced in his mind the progress of the Roman state from an humble origin to a wonderful extent of power and supremacy; reflected on the changes which it had undergone in point of government; admired the illustrious characters which had dignified its annals; lamented the occasional predominance of vicious men, and even of monsters in the human form; and hoped that his successors, with greater abilities than he could pretend to possess, would emulate his earnest desire of promoting the welfare and happiness of the people.

Never, in the whole series of Roman history, did the citizens and provincials enjoy a greater degree of public prosperity, or of private comfort, than in the reign of this excellent prince. He was equal in true wisdom to the

<sup>9</sup> Jul. Capitol.

<sup>10</sup> Vict. de Cæsaribus, cap. 15.

most enlightened of his predecessors, whether republican or imperial rulers: his humanity was superior to the boasted moderation of Titus; and his patriotism was not debased by the alloy of self-interest. We cannot, therefore, be surprised at the universal regret which March 7, his death excited. A fever seised him in the 161. seventy-fifth year of his age, and soon put an end to his life. The senate, with cordial unanimity, voted to him the honors of a god; and, if such profaneness could in any instance be excused or palliated, it would seem rather venial than highly reprehensible in the exterior deification of a prince whose disposition imitated divine justice, rectitude, and benevolence.

Marcus Annius, who, at the ceremony of his adoption, received the designation of Aurelius, assumed the respected name of Antoninus when he succeeded to the imperial dignity<sup>11</sup>. Although the undivided sovereignty was assigned to him by the senate, he granted an equal participation of power to Lucius Verus, whom the late emperor had at the same time adopted, but whom, for his luxurious and dissolute propensities, he had subsequently discountenanced. Marcus, for some years, did not lose any part of his real authority by this ostensible transfer; for his will was a law to his colleague<sup>12</sup>.

Foreign affairs wore a gloomy aspect when these princes began to reign. The Parthians, no longer repressed by the awe which the elder Antoninus had inspired, resolved to take arms against the Romans. The Catti harassed the provincial territories in Germany with furious incursions; and South-Britain was exposed to great danger from the fierce hostilities of the Caledonians. Verus undertook the task of chastising the Asiatic enemy. The

<sup>11</sup> As he was called *Verus* from one of his relatives, Hadrian complimented him for his high sense of honor and truth by saying that he ought to be styled *Verissimus*.

<sup>12</sup> *Jul. Capitol. Vit. Antonini Philosophi et Veri.*



governor of Cappadocia had been induced by the disorders of Armenia to lead an army into that country; and, being encountered by a Parthian host, he was defeated and slain: but the Romans found an opportunity of avenging this loss and disgrace.

Verus was not quick or alert in any pursuit but that of pleasure. By delaying his military operations, he suffered Vologeses to ravage Syria; and, while he indulged himself in every kind of amusement, and in the most shameful lewdness and debauchery, he transferred to his officers the conduct of the war. Considerable advantages were obtained in four campaigns. The Parthians suffered severely in several obstinate conflicts: Armenia was rescued from their grasp, and again subjected to Roman influence: the greater part of Mesopotamia was conquered: Ctesiphon and Babylon were taken: Seleucia was deprived of its population by the ferocity of Avidius Cassius, and reduced  
 A. D. to a ruinous state; and Vologeses was humbled  
 165. into forbearance, if not into submission. For these exploits, the two emperors received the honors of a triumph; and, at the same time, both were publicly styled fathers of their country<sup>13</sup>.

In Germany and in Britain, the enemies of Rome were also chastised. Victorinus was the commander by whose vigor the Catti were harassed and repelled: but he could not accomplish their subjugation. Calpurnius Agricola acted as governor of South-Britain, and was so successful in his engagements with the Caledonians, that they were over-awed into peace during the remainder of this reign.

The aggressive hostilities of the Marcomanni at length drew the imperial philosopher into the field. Those bar-

13 Capitol. Vit. Anton. Philos. et Veri.—Xiphil. Hist.—The return of Cassius from his campaign near the Tigris was attended with the loss of the majority of his army, from famine and disease; and the negligence of the same commander tainted Italy and other provinces with a pestilential disease, which his soldiers carried from Seleucia into Syria, whence they imported it into Europe on their return with Verus.

barians, while the legionaries were employed in the Asiatic war, formed a grand confederacy of German and Sarmatian tribes; but the influence and address of the provincial governors warded off the storm, until the Parthians were pacified and quieted. The consideration of that leisure which the Romans derived from their success in the East, did not so diminish the confidence of the Marcomanni, as to prevent the war which they had long meditated. Their incursions assumed so serious an aspect, that Marcus thought it his duty to act as a warrior in defence of the empire. As Verus, after the Parthian war, had exercised a greater degree of independent authority than he had before ventured to assume, it was apprehended that he would refuse to accompany his colleague in the expedition against the confederates: but he yielded to the declared wish of the senior emperor; and, after a series of sacrifices and pious ceremonies, of which Marcus was zealously observant, both princes commenced their military journey. Their advance intimidated the barbarians into a retreat; and the chief instigators of the war were put to death by the fury of their countrymen, but not before (as it should seem from the confused narrative of an ancient writer) a battle had been risked, in which the Romans, notwithstanding a considerable loss, obtained the victory<sup>14</sup>. The Quadi had entered into a league with the Marcomanni; but they were now induced to revoke their assent; and, having been deprived of their king by the stroke of death, they declared that they would not fix upon a successor without the concurrence of the two sovereigns of Rome. Other marks of respect gratified the conjunct princes; and a temporary calm ensued.

The renewal of the war, by the barbarians, furnished the Romans with another opportunity of triumphing over a combined host. Before the next cam-

A. D.  
166.

A. D.  
169.

paign was opened, Verus exhibited alarming symptoms of indisposition, while he was hastening from Aquileia <sup>A. D.</sup> with Marcus to avoid the plague. He was conducted to Altinum, where he remained for several days speechless, apparently from the effect of apoplexy<sup>15</sup>, and expired at the age of forty-two years. It was supposed that he had been poisoned by the secret order of his colleague, whose life was endangered by his machinations<sup>16</sup>; or by the direction of the empress Faustina, who resented his disclosure of his criminal connexion with her to her daughter Lucilla. The latter princess, who was the wife of the deceased voluptuary, was also suspected of having given him a deleterious potion, being jealous of his superior regard and affection for his sister Fabia<sup>17</sup>. That rumor which affected the honor and humanity of Marcus, was probably false; and the other reports, perhaps, were equally unfounded.

Although the defunct prince was far from being entitled by his character to divine honors, Marcus requested the senate to deify him, as that species of profanation had become the established practice of the Romans. He then resumed his military operations with undiminished spirit, but not always with the desired success; for he lost a considerable detachment under Vindex, and, on another occasion, his troops were routed with great loss. To recruit the army, which had been miserably thinned both by pestilence and war, he enlisted slaves, gladiators, and robbers, and hired a multitude of Germans to assist in the chastisement of their turbulent countrymen; and, to defray the charges of these levies, he sold many pictures and statues, golden cups and vases, jewels, rich apparel, and other valuable articles which his palace contained<sup>18</sup>.

We have scarcely any account of the operations of this war; and so confused are the incidental hints which relate

<sup>15</sup> Eutrop. lib. viii. <sup>16</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

<sup>17</sup> Jul. Capitol. Vit. Veri. <sup>18</sup> Jul. Capitol. Vit. Antonini Philos.



to it, that it is not altogether safe to hazard a positive assertion upon the subject. The enemy, who had advanced to the borders of Italy, received such a check as occasioned a precipitate retreat toward the Danube. The emperor continued to harass the barbarians; and, in the mean time, Cassius, who had distinguished himself against the Parthians, quelled an insurrection of the Egyptian peasants, who, being joined by many inhabitants of the towns, had ventured to attack the legionaries, and had even prevailed in the field<sup>19</sup>.

In the progress of the German war, the Roman troops, having invaded the territory of the Quadi, were greatly endangered. They had repelled, but not routed, their adversaries, who artfully drew them into a sterile and mountainous district, and subjected them to a close blockade. During this confinement, so severe were the sufferings of the soldiers from heat and from thirst, that their despair rose almost to phrensy. Marcus tried all the efficacy of persuasion, to produce in their minds that tranquil patience which he had imbibed from the philosophy of the Stoics: but he could not effectually compose their agitated spirits. The appearance of congregated clouds suddenly revived their hopes. Rain copiously fell, which they joyfully received in their mouths and their helmets. This was considered by some of the pagans as the produce of magic; and, by others, as a concession of the Gods to the prayers of the devout emperor; while the Christians attributed it to the supplications of the more pious votaries of Jesus, who composed one of the legions that served in this campaign<sup>20</sup>. Being now attacked by the Quadi, the Romans fought with such alacrity and vigor, that they rescued themselves from blockade, and secured the victory<sup>21</sup>. It is affirmed (but it does

<sup>19</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

<sup>20</sup> Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. v. cap. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Xiphil. Hist.—The same writer speaks of a battle, which occurred in a preceding campaign with the Jazyges, a Sarmatian people. It is unnoticed by

not clearly appear) that the emperor ascribed the providential relief to the prayers of his Christian subjects. However that may be, it is allowed that he thenceforward relaxed the rigors of persecution; for even this prince, although a modern historian of high fame represents him as "just and beneficent to *all mankind*," had long harassed the Christians, and sacrificed many of them at the shrine of bigotry.

A. D. 175. By the efficacy of another campaign, Marcus humbled the Quadi into a restoration of captives and an application for peace. They promised to abandon all those villages and stations which were not above six miles from the Danube; but they soon testified an unwillingness to execute this engagement, and entered into a new league with the Marcomanni and the Jazyges. These confederates attacked the Romans with an eagerness and impetuosity which seemed to promise success: yet they could not with all their efforts, and even with a great superiority of number, triumph over the disciplined vigor of the legionaries, by whom they were so severely harassed, that they sued for peace, which the emperor granted upon terms restrictive of their boundaries.

This pacification was accelerated by the necessity of opposing a revolt in Syria. Cassius, whose military services had been rewarded with the government of that province, was tempted by strong ambition to aim at the imperial dignity. In the reign of Antoninus Pius, he had earnestly sought an opportunity of revolting; but did not then flatter himself with a prospect of success. When he served in the eastern war, he was suspected by Verus of the same traitorous purpose; and Marcus was advised to take seasonable precautions against the eventual attempt.

Capitolinus, whose omission, however, does not detract from it's credibility. It took place upon the frozen Danube. Great confusion arose from the difficulty of obtaining a firm footing; and the conflict resembled a wrestling-match, in which the dexterity and address of the Romans ultimately prevailed.

The notice was received with all the coolness of philosophic indifference ; and Cassius was still employed in the service of the state, and was even furnished with additional means for the execution of his purpose. Trusting to a continuance of the hostile efforts of the Germans and Sarmatians, he assumed the purple at Antioch ; and, as he had artfully propagated a report of the death of Marcus, his authority was readily acknowledged in the Syrian and Egyptian provinces<sup>22</sup>.

The emperor, without passion or animosity, informed his troops of the rebellion, and complained of the ingratitude of a general whom he had highly favored. They promised to oppose the rebels with zeal ; and the senate, declaring Cassius an enemy of the state, called upon the citizens and provincials to support their lawful sovereign. The contest was short ; for, while Marcus was preparing for a personal expedition against his aspiring adversary, who pretended to justify his usurpation by alleging that a philosopher was not fit to govern, and that the prevalence of abuses and grievances, in every public department, required the vigilant eye of a disciplinarian and the strong hand of a reformer, intelligence arrived of the death of the rebel commander.

All the endeavours of Cassius to draw the leading men of Greece into his schemes were unsuccessful : he had no influence in Italy ; and, in the East, his interest so rapidly declined, that his ruin seemed inevitable. A centurion found an opportunity of attacking him, and wounded him in the neck ; and an inferior officer, joining in the assault, completed the work of death<sup>23</sup>. His head was sent to Italy, as a proof of the extinction of the revolt. His son was also put to death, but not by the command of the emperor, who had expressed his wish that no person of distinction, or of senatorial rank, should be capitally punished

22 Vulcat. Vit. Avidii Cassii.

23 Xiphil. Hist.



on this occasion; a declaration which did not entitle him to the praise of impartiality. Calvisius, governor of Egypt, was merely banished for having abetted the treason of Cassius; while several centurions, who were not more guilty than that exalted delinquent, were condemned to death by the senate, and not pardoned by Marcus<sup>24</sup>.

For the complete re-establishment of his authority in the East, the emperor continued that progress which the intelligence of the usurper's ruin had interrupted. When he was passing through Cilicia, the joy of his success was allayed by the death of Faustina, for whom, notwithstanding that profligacy which marked her character, he seems to have cherished a warm affection. He endowed a female society under her name, and ordered divine honors to be paid to her memory. He supplied her place, not with another wife, but with the daughter of an officer of Faustina's household, to whom he refused to give, over his children, the authority of a step-mother<sup>25</sup>. Yet, as he had the power of checking any undue interference of that kind, and had sufficient discernment to make a good matrimonial choice, his preference of a concubine to a wife may excite the surprise of the admirers of his philosophic morality.

As the citizens of Antioch had been the principal abettors of the late revolt, he commanded a discontinuance of their public assemblies, and of those exhibitions and spectacles from which they derived great pleasure; but he soon revoked this offensive edict. The people of Alexandria were still more readily pardoned; and he not only acted among them the part of a gracious sovereign, but condescended to take the professorial chair, and to become a moral instructor of his subjects.

After his return to Europe, he resided for some time at Athens, enjoying the conversation of philosophers, receiv-

<sup>24</sup> Vulcat. Vit. Cassii.—According to Xiphilin, he put none of the rebels to death, either of high or of low rank.

<sup>25</sup> Capitol. Vit. Anton. Philos.

communicating the lessons of wisdom. That this  
 be enabled to maintain its literary and scien-  
 tific education, he established professorships in every  
 branch of instruction, assigning ample and permanent sa-  
 laries to those who were to discharge the duties of  
 that useful purpose.

When he had en-  
 joyed the citizens with every mark of joy, and with  
 local testimonies of respect. When he had en-  
 joyed the city in triumphal procession with his son Com-  
 modus gratified the soldiers and the people with pecu-  
 nial presents; and, imitating the liberality of Hadrian,  
 he quished all claim for arrears due to the treasury.  
 At the same time, he corrected various abuses, and testi-  
 monies of humanity in reducing the gladiatorial combats to  
 the rank of a simple amusement, and depriving them of  
 the skill with which harmless weapons.

now in the decline of life, and having always  
 inclined to war, he hoped to pass the remains of  
 his life in perfect peace: but the warlike propensities of  
 the Germans and Sarmatians again disturbed his tranquil-  
 lity. They fiercely rushed into the provincial A. D.  
 178. despoiling the whole power of Rome.

finding war unavoidable, as no treaties could bind  
 the German adversaries, entered the temple of Bellona,  
 and with an ancient custom, threw an en-  
 tire javelin with all his force, as a token of deter-  
 mination. The citizens, flocking to the palace, de-  
 manded that he would not leave them without such moral and  
 religious precepts as might beneficially influence their  
 conduct during his absence, and in the event of his death.  
 At this tribute to his understanding and his attain-  
 ments, he readily acceded to the request, and, for three

A. D.       The barbarians did not decline a general en-  
 179.       gagement: but they suffered so severely in the  
 conflict, that their leaders had no very strong inclination  
 to renew the trial of courage and skill, while the legions  
 were under the conduct of able commanders. Some less  
 important actions followed, which were also favorable to  
 the Romans; whose joy, however, was damped by the in-  
 disposition of their beloved prince. His constitution had  
 been impaired by the fatigues of war; and all the care  
 of his physicians could not restore him to health and vigor.  
 When he despaired of recovery, he summoned his rela-  
 tives and friends into his chamber; and, expressing his  
 apprehensions of the pernicious influence which unre-  
 strained power might have over the mind of his son, con-  
 jured them to supply, with their sage advice, the youth's  
 deficiency of experience, and remind him of his duty,  
 both as a citizen and a sovereign. After this effort, the  
 March 17, weakness of his frame returned; and he died in  
 180.       the evening of the following day, at the age of  
 fifty-eight years<sup>27</sup>.

This prince did not manifest either patriotism or phil-  
 anthropy in bequeathing his profligate son as a legacy to  
 the Roman world. The base, vicious, and cruel disposi-  
 tion of Commodus, could not have escaped the penetration  
 of the father; and, as the imperial dignity was more elect-  
 ive than hereditary, he might have assigned the succes-  
 sion to his son-in-law Pompeianus, or to some other re-  
 spectable and distinguished senator. For this instance of  
 paternal partiality, and of disregard to the public welfare,  
 his memory may be justly censured; and his persecution  
 of the Christians may also be severely reprobated. Yet,  
 if we consider his general conduct, he was one of the best  
 princes that ever reigned at Rome.

27 Xiphilin adduces the authority of Dio for an atrocious act of wickedness  
 on the part of Commodus; at whose instigation (he says) the physicians took  
 an opportunity of shortening his father's life. But Herodian and Capitolinus  
 may be more safely followed on this occasion.



The talents which he had received from nature were improved by an extensive acquaintance with the learning of the times. He studied philology under the most celebrated grammarians and rhetoricians of Rome and Greece. He also cultivated the art of reasoning, so as to enable himself to detect the fallacies of sophistry. The accuracy of his mental perception was still farther invigorated by the study of geometry. He acquired a competent knowledge of law; became an early proficient in politics, and was profoundly conversant in the religious system of his country. But philosophy, considered as a moral guide and as the source of wisdom and virtue, occupied the greatest share of his time and attention. After a strict examination of the opinions of every eminent sect, he gave his testimony in favor of those which Zeno had promulgated, and retained, to the hour of his death, his attachment to Stoicism. To Junius Rusticus, by whom he had been assisted in exploring and developing all the profundities of this system, and whose sense and judgement rendered him in other respects an able adviser, he thought himself so highly indebted, that he treated him with peculiar homage and reverence. To all his instructors, indeed, he was exceedingly grateful and remarkably kind; for he properly regarded the communicators of knowledge as his best friends.

In his administration, he was almost invariably guided by a sense of humanity and by principles of justice. He knew that his power was absolute: yet he exercised it with as much caution as if he had been under the strict control of law. He might have treated the senate and people as slaves: yet he suffered them to enjoy the blessings of freedom. His government seemed rather to be a revival of the best times of the republic (with less oppression) than an image of that despotism with which the head of the empire was supposed to be invested.

## LETTER XIII.

*History of the ROMAN EMPIRE, from the Elevation of COMMODUS  
to that of SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS.*

COMMODUS might have found, in the contemplation of his father's government, a good model for his own conduct: but he despised all models of propriety, and consulted only his own caprice. Only a nation habituated to submission and servitude could have endured his sway beyond the year or the month of his accession to the supremacy. It has been maintained<sup>1</sup>, that he was not naturally cruel or depraved: but it may more reasonably be asserted, that no man could have proceeded to such a height of flagitious enormity, if he had not been innately savage and vicious.

For a short time, he attended to the advice of his father's friends: but their wisdom did not agree with his frivolity, or their virtue with his depravity. Their influence was occasionally shaken by the suggestions of courtly parasites, who had insinuated themselves into the good graces of the young emperor. They advised him to hasten to Rome from the fatigues of military service, and revel in all the pleasures which his high station would afford him. He was willing to take the hint, but was ashamed to run away from the camp like a coward; particularly after his brother-in-law Pompeianus had expostulated with him on the disgrace of such a precipitate retreat. The sense of shame, however, at length yielded to the exhortations of his dissolute companions; and, having given directions to his chief officers to keep the enemy in check, he announced his intention of departure. His generals attacked the barbarians without delay, and

<sup>1</sup> By Dio and Herodian, and also by Gibbon.

obtained some advantages in the field; and these exploits, aided by the distribution of money among their chieftains, soon led to a pacification<sup>2</sup>.

No reception could be more flattering than that with which the Romans honored Commodus, on his re-appearance in their metropolis. They could scarcely be said to treat him as a mere prince: they seemed almost to adore him as a God. The brutal treatment, therefore, which they afterward received from him, and the horrible cruelties which he wantonly committed, strikingly evinced his baseness and ingratitude. He might have reigned in the hearts of his people: but he had no wish to enjoy the high gratification of general regard and esteem, and resolved to govern by the propagation of terror and dismay.

In the first three years of his reign, no incidents of a memorable nature occurred in the department of internal policy: but some warlike transactions took place, beside those which preceded the late peace with the Germans. The imperial officers were successful in some conflicts beyond the limits of Dacia; and, in Britain, the Caledonians, who had invaded the provincial territories, and destroyed a Roman detachment, were severely chastised by Marcellus.

Dismissing his prudent and respectable ministers, the emperor disgraced the fourth year of his government by the admission of Perennis and other unprincipled men into his cabinet. To that officer he not only gave the command of the prætorian cohorts, but con-  
signed to him the chief management of political affairs. For such a task the præfect was not sufficiently qualified by wisdom, moderation, or integrity; and his government, which was rapacious and cruel, served only to entail odium upon his ill-judging patron. Lucilla, observing the progress of disgust and disaffection among the patricians,

A. D.  
183.

<sup>2</sup> Herod. lib. i. cap. 6.



and piqued at the superiority of her brother's wife, against whom she entertained a personal animosity, conspired with many senators and other mal-contents against the life of Commodus. Her lover Quadratus, an opulent patrician, entered into the combination ; and Quintianus, who was also a youth of distinction, undertook the task of assaulting the emperor's sacred person. In a narrow avenue to the amphitheatre, this conspirator met Commodus, and, holding up a dagger, exclaimed, " This is a pre-sent from the senate !" He was seised before he could make use of the weapon, and killed by some of the prince's military attendants. A strict inquiry was immediately instituted by Perennis; and not only those who were concerned in the conspiracy, but many who were suspected without sufficient cause, were put to death. Lucilla was banished to Capreæ; but she did not linger in a state of exile, being soon subjected to the fate of her accomplices<sup>3</sup>. The lady whose exalted rank had excited her envy, did not escape the emperor's vengeance; for we find that he, about this time, accused his wife Crispina of adultery, and ordered her to be capitally punished<sup>4</sup>.

Sometimes at the instigation of Perennis, but more frequently from the impulse of his own cruel disposition, Commodus doomed to death a multitude of his subjects. As it was supposed that Anterus, a freed-man, prompted his patron to some of these murders, several officers of the guard privately assassinated him, to the great regret of Commodus, who put Paternus and his friends to death for this act of treacherous violence<sup>5</sup>.

Many whole families were extirpated by the blood-thirsty rage of this prince. To deplore the fate of a victim, was deemed an insult to the court; and the relatives of the sufferer were hurried to the tomb. Two brothers of the Quintilian family, whose learning and talents had

<sup>3</sup> Herod. lib. i. cap. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

<sup>5</sup> Lamprid. Vit. Commodi.

recommended them to the favor of the late emperor, were sacrificed to the jealousy of his son ; and the disappearance of Sextus, the son of one of those innocent victims, led to the destruction of the rest of his kindred, who were suspected of having aided his escape.

While Perennis continued to direct the administration, his influence was endangered by a serious charge which was unexpectedly adduced against him in the A. D. midst of the public games. A stranger, habited as 186. a philosopher, accosted the emperor, and warned him of the danger to which he was exposed from the ambition of the minister, who, in concert with his two sons, aimed at the acquisition of the sovereignty. Perennis, enraged at the disclosure of his views (for it appears that he entertained such a scheme), ordered the rash informer to be consigned to the flames : and Commodus, confounded and undetermined, suffered his aspiring counsellor to remain in office. Not long afterward, a small party of soldiers, from Illyria, presented to the prince some money, coined in the name of the elder son of Perennis, as a proof of the dangerous ambition of that family<sup>6</sup> ; or (if we may adopt another account) 1500 men, sent to Rome by the officers of the legions then serving in Britain, complained of the minister's arbitrary conduct toward that army, and also imputed to him a project of imperial usurpation<sup>7</sup>. Not being aware of this application, Perennis did not stand upon his guard, or endeavour to escape ; and some emissaries, entering his house at night, easily put an end to his life. His sons were also sacrificed to the vengeance of the emperor, who did not even spare the minister's wife and sister.

The prætorian præfecture was for some time divided, as it seemed hazardous to give to one officer a post which combined such a degree of power and influence : but,

<sup>6</sup> Herod. lib. i, cap. 9. <sup>7</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

when Cleander, a Phrygian freed-man, had acquired by servility the favor of Commodus, he was gratified with the sole enjoyment of that high command, and also acted as prime minister. He disgraced the senate by introducing into that assembly low-born adventurers and unworthy purchasers of the honor; sold employments of every kind, arbitrarily influenced the courts of judicature, and sported with the lives and property of the citizens<sup>8</sup>.

During his administration, the ambition of a military ruffian threw several provinces into a state of disorder, and greatly alarmed the imperial court. Maternus, ob-  
 A. D. 187. serving the prevalence of unlicensed retreat from the camp, followed the irregular example; and, having assembled a body of deserters, drew to his standard a multitude of indigent and profligate adventurers. With this force he levied contributions in the Gallic towns, and diffused terror over the country. Augmenting his army by the release of prisoners, he extended his views to Spain; and that province was harassed with similar violence. Not content with military power, he aimed at the imperial dignity; and, avoiding the troops that were sent against him, he entered Italy with a select party, in quest of an opportunity of assassinating Commodus. Such an occasion, he hoped, might offer itself at the festival of Cybele, when it was customary to personate various characters, and indulge in licentious sport and disorderly diversion. He and his associates arrived safely at Rome, and intended, in the habit of prætorian soldiers, to introduce themselves amidst the guard: but, before the commencement of the celebrity, the scheme of tyrannicide was baffled by the repugnance of some of the party to the advancement of an insurgent leader, who had no legitimate claim to that sovereignty which the meditated act of violence would vacate. Being unexpectedly



betrayed by these comrades, Maternus was seised and put to death; and many of his accomplices suffered the same fate. The legionaries who had marched to different quarters to suppress the insurrection, soon dispersed the audacious depredators<sup>9</sup>.

The terror which was produced by this insurrective conspiracy, long agitated and appalled the emperor, while it did not diminish his cruelty. He less frequently exposed his person to the public eye; and he kept a more numerous guard in constant attendance. He left to his ministers all exterior acts of power, and chiefly passed his time at a villa, that he might avoid the dreaded turbulence of the city. He had another reason for retiring into the country. A pestilence had commenced it's ravages; and it was, as usual, much more prevalent in Rome and the large provincial towns, than in the rural districts. This horrible calamity was soon accompanied with a severe famine, which, if not produced, was alarmingly  
A. D. 188.  
aggravated, by the arts of Cleander, who, with the great wealth which he had iniquitously procured, purchased all the corn that his agents could find, and withheld it from immediate use, intending to distribute it in the sequel among the troops and the people, in the hope of obtaining their favor and support, if he should be tempted by the flow of prosperity to follow the ambitious example of Maternus<sup>10</sup>. With the same ultimate view of self-interest, he had opened spacious baths for the gratification of the citizens, and appropriated new buildings for public sports; while, to delude his master, and obviate that suspicion which might hurl him in a moment from his unmerited elevation, he made liberal pecuniary presents

9 Herod. lib. i. cap. 10.

10 For this assertion we have the authority of Herodian; but Xiphilin affirms, that Papirius, the chief regulator of the supply of provisions, studiously limited the allowance, with a view of exciting general odium against the minister, to whom, he thought, the people would readily impute the dangerous evil.

to the prince and his voluptuary companions. These arts, however, did not avert the ruin which his villany deserved. The clamors against him were loud, and the execrations bitter and acrimonious : yet he continued to pillage the rich, and shed the blood of the most meritorious subjects in the empire.

A. D.      Losing all patience, the multitude at length  
189.      rose, and tumultuously demanded the exemplary punishment of the vile oppressor of the nation. When the unarmed throng approached the suburban villa in which the emperor then resided, Cleander sent out a body of horse to attack his bold adversaries ; and some slaughter ensued. The cavalry, pursuing the rioters, reached the city, and renewed the carnage with savage fury : but, being harassed with volleys of stones and tiles from the roofs, and also assaulted by some mal-content cohorts, they fled in dismay. From a dread of the minister's vengeance, no person, for a considerable time, would venture to inform Commodus of this commotion ; and, indeed, his doors were closed against intrusion : but at length his sister Fadilla, procuring access by the privilege of consanguinity, broke out into bitter lamentations, and disclosed to him the full extent of his danger. He did not hesitate for a moment with regard to the course which he should pursue. He summoned Cleander into his presence ; ordered his head to be stricken off, and exhibited as a pleasing spectacle to the people ; and thus put an end to the tumult. It did not, however, entirely subside before the populace had murdered the minister's two sons, and some of his principal friends<sup>11</sup>.

Commodus now so far resumed his courage and confidence, as to return to Rome, and to appear frequently in public : but the presence of such a prince could not gladden the hearts of his people. His conduct diffused ter-

11 Herod. lib. i. cap. 12, 13.—Xiphil.

ror through the city; and his subsequent government rendered him, still more decidedly, an object of execration. His cruelties were wanton and unprovoked; and the same barbarous spirit attended even his diversions. If he had only destroyed wild beasts in his rage for sport, the public would have applauded his extraordinary dexterity and his unerring aim, without complaining of his sanguinary propensities; but, in his combats with gladiators<sup>12</sup>, he killed many of those who, while they ostensibly fought with him, did not dare to give him even the slightest wound; and, when they fought without killing their adversaries of the same ignoble profession, he frequently compelled them to render the contest fatal. If any of the spectators, eagerly pushing forward, received a mortal wound on these occasions, he was still more highly gratified. The senators, whom he ordered to attend those exhibitions of murderous skill, viewed them with fear and trembling; for, if they did not seem pleased with the horrible sport in which he madly indulged, and did not loudly express, with numerous repetitions of praise, their high opinion of his wonderful skill, their lives were in serious danger.

The successors of Cleander in the prætorian command were Julianus and Regillus, who could not expect long to enjoy that authority which rested on the caprice of a despot. Commodus put them to death in a fit of jealousy, in an emotion of anger, or from a sudden desire of manifesting uncontrolled power. Many other unfortunate men were doomed to the same fate, without the least in- A. D. 190.  
quiry into their pretended delinquency. Fuscus, Torquatus, and four other citizens, who had borne the consular *insignia*, were companions in death, being at the

12 He was so vain of his gladiatorial skill and prowess, that, upon a colossal statue erected in honor of the sun, he substituted his own sculptured head for that which belonged to the figure, and inscribed on the base these words,—“ the Conqueror of a thousand Gladiators.”—*Herodian*.



same moment dismissed from the joys of life, with their relatives and friends<sup>13</sup>.

The abominable tyranny of this prince was more particularly reprobated by the people, when a dreadful fire had consumed the spacious and magnificent temple of Peace,

A. D. which was used as a bank and a store-house, and  
<sup>191.</sup> had also destroyed a considerable part of the city. This disaster was attributed to the displeasure of the Gods, who, it was supposed, could not behold, without extreme indignation, the emperor's atrocious wickedness and villany. He was now viewed, with less favorable eyes, even by the vulgar admirers of his sports and exhibitions.

While he flattered himself with the idea of having secured his throne by impressing general sensations of fear, he exposed himself to the greatest danger by the terror which he inspired. On the approach of the festival of Janus, he amused his weak mind with deliberating upon the particular mode in which he should publicly appear. The resolution which he adopted was indecorous and disgraceful. He declared that he would march out of the school of gladiators, armed but unclothed, and attended only by individuals of that description. Marcia, the concubine for whom he professed the greatest regard, remonstrated against this strange absurdity, this senseless degradation, and hinted at the danger of trusting his life in the hands of such men. His determination remained unshaken by her hints, or by the tears with which they were enforced; and, sending for the præfect Lætus and his chamberlain Electus, he ordered them to prepare a bed for him among the gladiators, that he might be ready to accompany them early in the morning to the scene of sport. Their respectful expostulations, and their humble entreaties, only excited his anger. He retired to the

chamber in which he usually reposed at noon, and inserted in a pocket-book the names of senators and other citizens whom he intended to destroy before the next day. This book, being left in his room when he went to the bath, was taken up by a favorite page, in whose hand it was found by Marcia; and the sight of her own name at the head of the list filled her with extreme horror. The præfect and chamberlain, being also marked out for death, concurred with her in the necessity of self-preservation; and it was resolved that poison should be immediately given to the murderous prince. On his return from the bath, a cup of wine, impregnated with some dele-  
Dec. 31.  
192.  
 terious ingredient, was presented to him by Marcia. He drank with unsuspecting eagerness; and, feeling himself drowsy, yielded to the influence of sleep. Soon awaking, he vomited so copiously, that the poison seemed likely to lose its effect. Dreading his recovery, the three conspirators sent a robust youth into his chamber, to strangle him<sup>14</sup>.

Thus perished the degenerate son of an estimable prince. Instead of emulating the character and conduct of his philosophic father, Commodus showed himself a base and detestable imitator of the vices and barbarity of Nero: his fate, therefore, was by no means unmerited. It was reported by those who had rescued Rome from his tyranny, that he died of an apoplexy; and, while various opinions respecting his fate were entertained by the public, the conspirators anxiously deliberated upon the choice of a successor.

Helvius Pertinax was distinguished by capacity, courage, and fortitude. He had risen from a low station to the highest dignities in the state; had presided over provinces with ability and reputation; and, at the time of the emperor's death, acted as governor of Rome. One writer<sup>15</sup>

14 Herod. lib. i.—Xiphil.—Lamprid.

15 Capitolinus.

accuses him of being privy to the conspiracy ; but it appears, upon better authority <sup>16</sup>, that he had not the least previous knowlege of it. Lætus and Electus went to his house in the night, and roused him from sleep. Thinking that they had been ordered to take away his life, he coolly said, “ This is what I have long expected, being almost  
 “ the only survivor of the friends of Marcus, and, in that  
 “ respect, obnoxious to his son.”—“ We seek not your  
 “ death (replied the præfect); but offer you both safety  
 “ and sovereignty. We have anticipated the sanguinary  
 “ aims of the tyrant, by inflicting upon him that punish-  
 “ ment which he deserved.”—Pertinax still doubted ; but, when Electus had shown him the threatening scroll, and assured him of the true state of affairs, he embraced the offered dignity ; and messengers were sent to the camp, to persuade the soldiery to acquiescence. Apprehending that the troops, indulged by the late prince in licentiousness, might not be disposed to accept, for their sovereign, a commander who had been accustomed to enforce discipline, a great number of citizens hastened to the camp to overcome whatever reluctance might be evinced. A recommendatory speech from Lætus did not remove the repugnance of the troops: but, being unarmed at the time of a festival, they suffered themselves to be influenced by the people, and followed their example in saluting Pertinax as emperor.

Not considering this election as altogether legitimate,

A. D. Pertinax waited for the sanction of the senate.

193. The conscript fathers met as soon as day appeared, and unanimously acknowledged him as emperor ; and, at the same meeting, a decree was fulminated against the deceased prince, couched in the most opprobrious terms that could be devised. “ Let the body of the execrable tyrant, whom we are unable to punish, be

<sup>16</sup> That of Dio, supported by Herodian.



“dragged by a hook to the place where the vilest criminals are exposed: let the infamous gladiator be publicly torn in pieces: let the enemy of the Gods and of his country, the assassin of the innocent, the public robber, the flagitious oppressor of his subjects, be degraded by every mark of ignominy, and branded with every proof of detestation: he who was more inhuman than even Domitian, and more basely profligate than Nero, deserves all the extent of general indignation.”

These and other strong expressions were vociferated in the senate, and embodied in a decree<sup>17</sup>. Finding that Pertinax had ordered the corpse to be buried, some of the members wished that it might be dug up; but this impotent mark of resentment was exploded by others; and, when the statues of the tyrant had been thrown down, and his name erased where-ever it had been inscribed or exhibited, the senate and the people contented themselves with reviling his memory.

The conduct of the new emperor did not disappoint the hopes of the upright and quiet citizens, however it might displease the licentious soldiery. He strictly prohibited the troops from insulting or molesting the people, and endeavoured to maintain discipline by firmness without severity. He liberated prisoners and recalled exiles, when it appeared that they were either entirely innocent, or guilty of only trivial offences. Base informers were punished for their concern in the ruin of good and virtuous citizens; and precautions were taken against the abduction or the success of future calumnies. The courtiers, parasites, and ministers of pleasure and luxury, who had profited by the extortions of Commodus, were compelled to refund a part (if the whole could not be obtained) of that property which had not been granted to their merit, but procured by their profligacy. A considerable quantity of valuable

furniture belonging to the late prince, his wardrobe, plate, equipage, richly ornamented gladiatorial arms, slaves, buffoons, and concubines, were exposed to sale; and the produce enabled him to reward the prætorian troops for their acquiescence in his elevation, and also to gratify the people with a considerable donative. Although the treasury was exhausted by a course of prodigality, he was so far from imposing any new taxes for its replenishment, that he even abolished some recent imposts, trusting to rigid œconomy for the retrieval of financial credit. He introduced order and regularity into every branch of administration; and endeavoured, by his own example, to enforce that integrity, correctness, and propriety of conduct, which he recommended by his instructions<sup>18</sup>.

While every man who had a sense of virtue and honor, and a regard for the true interest of his country, applauded the new government, the military inhabitants of Rome, particularly the prætorian troops, could not dissemble their disgust. They wished for a prince who would tolerate their irregular practices, connive at their insolence to the people, and not restrain their idleness and dissipation; and, being encouraged in their seditious views by Lætus, who did not think that he had been sufficiently honored or recompensed for his signal services, they requested the consul Falco to assume the imperial dignity. Some steps were taken for that purpose by the ambitious magistrate; but the senate, interfering on the occasion, checked his violence by proposing that he should be condemned as a traitor. The lenity of Pertinax saved the consul from punishment; without conciliating the soldiery. Lætus having put many of the mutineers to death, merely with a view of exciting the resentment of their comrades against the emperor, from whom, he falsely alleged, he had received orders to that effect, the sedition rapidly in-

18 Herod. lib. ii. cap. 4.—Capitol. Vit. Pertinacis.—Xiphil.

creased; and two hundred men<sup>19</sup>, the boldest of the party, marched to the palace with the most criminal intentions. The imperial attendants retired in March 28. consternation, leaving the prince to his fate. The traitorous præfect was ordered to remonstrate with the seditious party; but he avoided the meeting, and, confining himself to his house, awaited the effect of his intrigues. Pertinax, scorning the meanness of flight, and hoping to allay the discontent of the mutineers, advanced toward them, and mildly expostulated with them. They seemed to be over-awed, and many began to retire; but a Belgic ruffian approached the emperor and stabbed him. Addressing a short prayer to Jupiter the Avenger, he covered his face with his robe, and received a repetition of wounds. Electus, endeavouring to defend his endangered master, was at the same time murdered<sup>20</sup>.

Dreading the resentment of the people, the assassins retreated to their fortified camp; and the whole guard prepared for defence. As the citizens, content with expressing their grief for the loss of an estimable prince, remained quiet, the arrogant and rapacious soldiers resolved to expose the sovereignty to actual sale. Even this insult to the nation did not rouse the degenerate Romans to vigorous action. Sulpicianus, who had been appointed governor of the city by his son-in-law Pertinax, offered himself as a purchaser; and another offer was made by Didius Julianus, who, as well as his competitor, had discharged the consular functions. The troops were more inclined to the election of Sulpicianus; but, when Julianus had warned them of the danger of choosing one who would probably take vengeance for the death of his friend, they concluded a treaty with him, and declared him emperor<sup>21</sup>.

19 Or 300, according to Capitolinus.

20 Herod. lib. ii. cap. 5.—Xiphil.

21 The price which he offered was at the rate of 6250 drachms (about 200



A sovereignty thus obtained was not likely to be long enjoyed by the purchaser. The new emperor was not destitute of political ability or legal knowledge<sup>22</sup>; but those qualifications were not regarded by the turbulent electors; and his want of vigor (for he was enervated by intemperance and luxury) precluded the effective exercise of that authority with which he was invested. When he was conducted to the palace by the soldiery, he was satirised and reviled by the people, some of whom even threw stones at him. He bore every insult with patient meekness, and was not so depressed by his want of popularity, as to gratify the citizens by a resignation of his dignity. As the over-awed senate readily confirmed his appointment, he thanked the members for their good-will, and promised to deserve, by just and gracious government, a continuance of their favor. In going to the Capitol to offer sacrifices, he was again reproached and ridiculed by the plebeians, whom he in vain endeavoured to conciliate by pecuniary offers. Their riotous behaviour so far subdued his patience, that he commanded the guard to attack the clamorous throng: but the blood which was consequently shed served only to inflame his adversaries. At the Circus, the tumult was renewed: the soldiers were loudly execrated for the murder of Pertinax; and Niger was recalled to Rome by the popular voice, to supersede the usurper, and rescue the nation from dishonor.

Niger was then governor of Syria; and, being fond of power, he gladly accepted the flattering invitation: but the path to the throne was encumbered with difficulties. Septimius Severus, who administered the affairs of Pannonia, caught the flame of ambition, as soon as he was

points sterling) for each soldier. Eutropius says, that Julianus was concerned in the death of Pertinax; but this charge is unsupported by the authority of Herodian or of Dio.

<sup>22</sup> He was *juris peritissimus*, says Eutropius; but his grandfather, who was twice consul, and who framed a system of law for the instruction and guidance of the prætors, had acquired a higher degree of juridical reputation.

informed of the death of Pertinax ; and, being as prompt in action as he was quick in conception, he had a better prospect of success than Niger, who, though brave, was an indolent voluptuary. Another bold adventurer, at the same time, offered himself to the notice of the legionaries, as a candidate for high power and pre-eminence. This was Clodius Albinus, who, as well as Severus, was an African, but of respectable Roman descent. He was governor of Britain ; and, while he enjoyed that dignity, had obtained the high applause of the senate by supporting the authority of the venerable assembly against imperial arrogance and despotism. When Julianus was sacrificing (says an historian) three stars suddenly appeared around the sun ; and these, in his opinion, presaged that contest for the sovereignty which now arose.

Having privately consulted the legionary officers at Antioch, Niger found them ready to co-operate with him for the expulsion of Julianus from the throne. He then called a meeting of the troops and the people, and urged them to promote his views for the deliverance of Rome. He was immediately saluted emperor, and conducted to the temples, in pompous procession, to implore success from the Gods. Thus encouraged, and also favored with promises of aid from some of the Oriental princes, he seemed to think that the empire was his own ; and, postponing his expedition to Rome, he amused himself and the Syrians with various sports, games, and spectacles. In the mean time, Severus, having drawn the troops of Illyria into his interest by a promise of revenging the death of the late emperor, for whose memory they had a great regard, and prevailed upon the legions in Pannonia, by holding out a prospect of reward, to follow the same course, made preparations for a speedy march to the imperial metropolis.

Julianus acted with some appearance of spirit, as soon as he was apprised of the revolt of Severus. He pro-

cured a vote from the senate, declaring that commander a public enemy, and inflicting the same stigma upon his soldiers, if they should not, by an appointed time, quit his standard; and he not only commissioned Valerius to succeed him in his government, but sent a centurion to deprive him of life. This was an empty menace, against an officer who had a powerful army at his devotion: but, in the case of Lætus, who was the reputed friend of Severus, a mandate of death was easily executed. Finding that he could not depend on the courage or attachment of the prætorians, he began to despair of retaining the whole power, and proposed to the senate, that Severus should be received as his associate. A vote passed to that effect; but the majority of the members, intimidated by the approach of the revolvers, soon resolved to transfer the undivided sovereignty to Severus. At a subsequent meeting, while the emperor trembled in his palace, the consuls recommended an inquiry into the critical state of the nation; and the result was an acknowledgement of the pretensions of Severus, accompanied with an order for the death of Julianus; who, exclaiming against this cruelty, and imploring mercy, fell by the hand of a military tribune<sup>23</sup>.

June 2.

Before Severus reached Rome, he manifested his indignation against the enemies of Pertinax. The immediate agents in the murder were put to death; and their accomplices in the conspiracy, being drawn to his camp by a promise of pardon, were disarmed, disbanded, and driven to the distance of one hundred miles from the city. Continuing his progress, he soon presented himself before the gates, and was received by the senate and the people with loud acclamations. In his first address to the assembly, he declared that he would pay a due regard to aristocratical principles, would strictly attend to the demands of



justice, and suffer no one to be condemned either to death or any inferior punishment without a legal trial; and, indeed, that he would emulate the conduct and government of Marcus Aurelius and Pertinax<sup>24</sup>. Those who knew his duplicity and dissimulation, did not receive with implicit faith these plausible professions.

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## LETTER XIV.

### *History of the Reign of Septimius Severus.*

IT is only by regularity and strictness of discipline, that soldiers are rendered instrumental in the preservation of public peace. When they are suffered to give way to dissipation and profligacy, and are encouraged by their sovereign in licentiousness and insolence, they too frequently become the subverters of that tranquillity which they ought to maintain. Commodus, by a course of indulgence, had relaxed the patriotism and impaired the morality of the prætorian cohorts; and, finding themselves in possession of exorbitant power, they despised the authority of law, insulted the citizens, and invaded the rights of the senate. The new emperor made a fresh choice of guards, and kept them in due subjection to his own power: but he did not cure the evil of which the people complained. He rather wished to establish a military despotism, than to allow to the senate it's legitimate power,

<sup>24</sup> Herod. lib. ii. cap. 14.—Xiphil. Hist. He showed an exterior regard for Pertinax by celebrating his apotheosis or deification with great magnificence; but, in this pompous display, he was probably less influenced by real respect for that prince, than by a desire of popularity. He knew that the public lamented the death of Pertinax, and therefore wished it to be thought, that he came forward as an avenger of the murder, rather than as an ambitious adventurer.

or give the people that freedom to which they were entitled. He therefore augmented the guard in a quadruple proportion, and conciliated the privates as well as the officers by indulgence and liberality.

To secure the power which he had so easily obtained, he had recourse both to force and to artifice. While he was employed in preparing for a vigorous contest with Niger, he amused Albinus with hopes of imperial association. His policy served to cherish that hope, and keep up that suspense, which checked the insurrective movements of the proprætor of Britain. As it seemed necessary to regulate the affairs of Rome, Severus did not immediately undertake an expedition against Niger. To civil concerns he directed his attention, and prudently provided for the tranquillity of the city. He seated himself on the judicial bench, and decided a variety of causes. Some judges, whom the aggrieved provincials had accused of misconduct, were punished with severity; and other delinquents found him a stern and rigorous judge. His cruelty became a topic of censure, when he put to death many of the friends of the unfortunate Julianus; but the sanguinary acts of this part of his reign were trivial, in comparison with his subsequent atrocities<sup>1</sup>.

When the success of Severus at Rome was announced to Niger, he roused himself from his inactivity, and prepared for defence. He fortified the passes of Mount Taurus, and other posts; added a great army of provincials to his legionary force, and sent Æmilianus, governor of Asia Propria, to the coast of the Propontis. This officer, jealous of the superiority of Niger, and anxious for the safety of his children, who were in the hands of Severus, did not act with that determined spirit which was necessary to give success to the arms of his ostensible friend. Near Cyzicus, he was defeated by the troops of Severus, and,

1 Spart. Vit. Severi.

soon after, put to death ; and the conqueror quickly obtained possession of the capital of Bithynia ; but the inhabitants of Nice, in the same province, warmly supported the cause of Niger, and, with the aid of many fugitives from the late defeat, and of other troops, fiercely opposed the imperial host, but met with a severe repulse. The victors pursued the routed army toward mount Taurus, where their progress was checked by the strength of the new works. Many fruitless assaults were made : yet the perseverance of the troops remained unshaken ; and, in the winter, the violence of torrents so effectually weakened the fortifications, that the besieged desisted from defence, and fled in dismay<sup>2</sup>.

The army of Severus now invaded Cilicia, A. D. and met the foe near Issus. Valerianus and 194. Anulinus acted as the chief commanders ; for it does not appear that the emperor was in the field at this crisis of his fortune. Niger took an advantageous station, placing his heavy-armed troops in front, his slingers and archers in the rear ; while he was guarded on each flank by precipices or by woody hills. He had a considerable superiority of number ; but the best troops were those of Severus. For several hours, the battle raged without any visible tendency to a victory on either side : but, when a high wind, accompanied with rain, thunder, and lightning, began to blow in the faces of Niger's soldiers, they fancied that the Gods were inclined to favor the cause of Severus ; and their efforts declined into languor and inertness. Being soon after assaulted in flank by Valerianus, who had forced his way through all obstructions with a select *corps*, the nearest division retreated ; and the redoubled vigor of Anulinus, in front, concurred to render him master of the field. The fugitives were slain in heaps ; and a great number of persons, who had been drawn to-



ward the spot by anxious curiosity, were cruelly massacred<sup>3</sup>.

When the victorious army approached Antioch, Niger endeavoured to escape beyond the Euphrates; but he was overtaken by a party of horse, and instantly decapitated, by order of the commanding officer. Although he was less cruel than Severus, he would probably have treated him in the same manner, if he had been successful in the contest; and, therefore, he had no reason to expect that his life would be spared. His wife and children were also put to death by the conqueror; and a multitude of his partisans, even many who had joined him with great reluctance, suffered the same fate<sup>4</sup>.

The friends of Niger still retained the important station of Byzantium, which he had garrisoned as soon as he heard of the election of Severus. To the third year was the siege of that city protracted; so great was its strength, and so copiously was it furnished with the means of defence. At length, when the citizens had lost the bulk of their naval force by storms and by the efforts of the besiegers, and severely felt the miseries of famine, they surrendered the town to the will of their opponents, who, incensed at such obstinacy of resistance, put the whole garrison to the sword, murdered the magistrates, annulled the privileges and seized the property of the inhabitants, destroyed the walls and all the public buildings, and subjected the place to the authority of the citizens of Perinthus<sup>5</sup>.

In the mean time, Albinus was invited to Rome by many of the senators, who promised to support his pretensions against the sanguinary tyranny of Severus. Aware of the interest of his rival, the treacherous emperor, while he endeavoured to delude him by a show of

<sup>3</sup> On this occasion, says Xiphilin, 20,000 of the partisans of Niger lost their lives.

<sup>4</sup> Herod. lib. iii.—Spart. Vit. Nigri.

<sup>5</sup> Xiphil.—Herod.

friendship, dispatched emissaries into Britain, with secret instructions to seek an opportunity of murdering him. The messengers, however, were detected by Albinus, and punished with death for their readiness to obey the unlawful commands of a tyrant. He then prepared to enter the lists with the acknowledged emperor, whom, for having procured by terror the acquiescence of the senate, he considered as a daring usurper. He was now stigmatised, by a vote of that assembly, as a public enemy; and all his abettors were pronounced traitors and rebels. Having crossed the channel into Gaul with the legionaries and a body of provincial warriors, he quickly augmented his force; but his cause was not so generally espoused, as he wished or expected, by the Gallic subjects of Rome.

After some less important conflicts, a decisive engagement occurred near Lyons. Both armies, it is A. D. said, amounted to 150,000 men<sup>6</sup>; but, if that 197. statement be correct, we are not informed of the particular number which each competitor commanded. That of Severus was probably more numerous than the opposite host. Both parties displayed great courage and alacrity. The imperial troops, when they had with difficulty repelled the left wing, pushed their advantage with such vigor, that their adversaries, after a severe loss, fled to the camp in confusion. In the mean time, the insurgents who composed the right wing, trusting to the effect of a secret contrivance, advanced to a certain spot, and, as soon as they had discharged their javelins, retreated with an appearance of timidity. The feint was so far successful, that the foremost troops of Severus, in attempting a pursuit, fell into wide and deep ditches covered with earth. Others fell over their companions; and, in the confusion which necessarily arose from this unexpected obstacle to their march, great slaughter was made among them by the

well-directed weapons of their adversaries. The emperor, alarmed at the menacing danger, hastened to the spot with the prætorian cohorts, and endeavoured to check the progress of the exulting foe; and, when he found that all his efforts and persuasions could not prevent the retreat of his battalions, he tore his robe with indignation, and rushed among his dastardly legionaries with an air of phrensy or of fury. Many again faced the enemy, not without killing some of their associates, who pressed too closely upon them. When the tide seemed to turn in favor of the emperor, his general Lætus approached. He had kept his troops apart, as if he wished for an opportunity of triumphing over both competitors: but, as soon as he perceived the advantage which his master had obtained, he came forward, and his exertions decided the fortune of the day against Albinus, who stabbed himself in despair<sup>7</sup>.

Severus disgraced his success by shameless rapine and execrable cruelty. He seized the property of the open or suspected partisans of his rival, and wreaked his sanguinary vengeance upon a multitude of provincials, before he returned to Rome. He was received by the citizens of all ranks with seeming joy, but with inward fear. The people were gratified with a considerable present of provisions, and the soldiers were liberally rewarded: but, addressing the assembled senators, he applauded the rigor of Commodus, as necessary for the public security, and declared that he would punish the accomplices of Albinus, because they were not entitled to indulgence or pardon. He condescended to spare the lives of thirty-five of the members, who were accused of favoring his enemy<sup>8</sup>; while he gave orders for the death of forty-one distinguished senators, whom he would not even permit to vindicate themselves. Many citizens of inferior rank, whom their

<sup>7</sup> Herod. lib. iii.—Xiphil.

<sup>8</sup> Spart. Vit. Sev.—Xiphilin says, *twenty-nine*.



obscurity might have been expected to screen, were also sacrificed to the vindictive rage of the too fortunate tyrant.

When he had thus overwhelmed all competition for the Roman sovereignty, he aimed at foreign conquest. The Parthians having recovered the greater part of Mesopotamia during the late contest, he entered that province with a great army, and relieved Nisibis from a siege. To promote his success, he constructed a *flotilla* on the Euphrates; and having passed by a canal to the Tigris, took Seleucia and Babylon without the least difficulty. A. D.

Ctesiphon, being personally defended by Vol- 198.  
geses, the Parthian king, made a resolute defence: but it was at length stormed, deluged with the blood of a great number of it's inhabitants, and robbed of it's portable wealth, without being retained as a conquest?

Satisfied with his success against the Parthians, the emperor resolved to chastise the Arabian prince Barsemius for his alliance with Niger. He fiercely assaulted Atra, a strong town belonging to that prince near the Tigris: but his attempts were baffled by the vigor of the garrison; and he retired from the walls after a considerable loss of his most intrepid warriors. Amidst the irritation arising from this disappointment, he murdered Crispus, a captain of the guard, for daring to lament the miseries of war, and the sacrifice of the obscure but unoffending multitude to the caprice or ambition of the rulers of nations; and he at the same time put Lætus to death, from a doubt of his fidelity, or a jealousy of the interest which that officer had acquired among the soldiery. Resuming the siege of Atra, he made some fruitless assaults, and not only lost many of his men by the copious effusions of A. D.  
missiles and the varied modes of defence, but 199.  
found his European troops disobedient and refractory. He therefore relinquished the enterprise, and marched

into Judæa, where he enacted some useful regulations, but peremptorily prohibited his pagan subjects from an adoption either of the Mosaic system or the Christian faith<sup>10</sup>. Directing his course into Egypt, he gave, to the people of Alexandria, a government more republican in it's form than that which his predecessors had allowed them.

A. D. 203. After his return to the chief seat of his power, he gave such unlimited confidence to an African adventurer, named Plautianus, that the tyranny of the government, which was sufficiently flagrant before this minister had full sway, was shamefully and atrociously aggravated. He commanded Bassianus, the elder of his sons, to espouse the daughter of this infamous oppressor of the people, by whom all the excesses of robbery and murder were perpetrated without hesitation or remorse. Every one trembled at the frown of this unworthy favorite, who, without the title of emperor, exercised all the power which it could confer. By an intimidated and passive nation, he was, outwardly, almost adored as a demigod, while he was secretly execrated as a monster. It was so dangerous to accuse him, or to complain of him, that with the full extent of his tyranny even the vigilant emperor was unacquainted, although he must have known him to be an arbitrary and oppressive minister.<sup>11</sup>.

A. D. 204. When Severus, in a moment of jealousy or disgust, ordered the destruction or removal of some of the statues which had been voted to Plautianus at Rome by the servility of the citizens, strong hopes were conceived of his disgrace and ruin. Some provincial governors, eager to testify their aversion, followed the example of their sovereign: but they were punished for this premature exposure of their sentiments; and Severus, when he condemned one of these præfects, declared that

<sup>10</sup> Spart. Vit. Sev.

<sup>11</sup> Herod. lib. iii. cap. 10, 11.—Xiphil.

he would ever maintain inviolate the honor and safety of his friend. Bassianus was less attached to the arrogant minister ; whom, indeed, he hated, and doomed to destruction. Plautianus, being informed by his daughter of the hostile intentions of her husband, formed a scheme which united revenge with ambition. He was more strongly inflamed to the execution of this scheme, by hearing that the emperor's eyes were fully opened to his enormities in consequence of a serious charge against him, delivered upon a death-bed by a person of high distinction. The accuser was Geta (the brother of Severus), whose information had a speedy effect. Plautianus, alarmed at the visible coolness of his patron, and dreading the vengeance of insulted majesty, instigated Saturninus, a military tribune, to the murder of Severus and Bassianus. The officer, being menaced with death, if he should refuse to undertake this commission, gave a promise of compliance ; but resolved in his heart to expose the treasonable villany of the minister. Having procured access to the chamber of the prince, whom he roused from repose by a general intimation of the very important nature of the business which called him to the palace, he proceeded to state the terrific particulars. The emperor could not easily believe that Plautianus had conspired against his life ; and he even suspected that the tribune had been suborned by Bassianus to impute treason to the minister, as a ground for his destruction. He immediately summoned his son into his presence, and confronted him with Saturninus, who, with a view of proving his own veracity, offered to draw Plautianus into the palace by an assurance of the execution of the plot. The lure was so operative, that he quickly presented himself with a small train ; and, being saluted with the imperial title by his supposed accomplice, he entered the chamber with an air of confidence : but his rising joy was converted into horror, when he found himself apprehended as a



traitor. He so strongly denied the charge, that Severus was inclined to dismiss him in safety. Bassianus, however, observing a breast-plate under his garment, sternly exclaimed, "Do you visit the prince in the evening, uninvited?—and do you usually come armed?"—and, without waiting for an answer, he ordered the guard to punish his intended treason with death. The emperor not resisting the enforcement of his son's will, the minister suffered the fate which he had long deserved<sup>12</sup>.

Severus still doubted the guilt of Plautianus; yet, with cruel inconsistency, he put to death some of the friends and dependents of that minister, as if he had been really a traitor. Many were, at the same time, banished for their connexions with him; and among these were his son and daughter, whom, when they had languished for seven years in exile, the ferocity of Bassianus doomed to destruction.

Papinian, a distinguished civilian, succeeded Plautianus as chief minister. His wisdom and ability, as a judge and a statesman, few were inclined to doubt; and every one acknowledged his great superiority to his predecessor in the virtues of a respectable citizen: but he had not sufficient influence over the mind of Severus, to check, in any considerable degree, that spirit of unrelenting cruelty

<sup>12</sup> Herod. lib. iii. cap. 10—12. —This account is rendered probable by the daring ambition and atrocious iniquity which marked the character of Plautianus, who could not bear the thought of losing that power which he had so shamefully abused. But some readers may think, that Dio's statement, as given by Xiphilin, is more entitled to credit, as a senator of Rome may be supposed to have had a better opportunity of knowing the truth than a grammarian of Alexandria. According to that historian, Bassianus procured the adduction of a false charge against his father-in-law, who (it was alleged) had hired ten centurions to murder the emperor and the heir apparent; and, when the accused appeared at court, the son, regardless of his father's expostulations, fiercely assaulted him, and, when his hand was checked, commanded his attendants to put him to death. Yet, even if it should be allowed that Plautianus was innocent of the imputed treason, he was guilty of numberless acts of cruelty, and of every kind of oppression.—Spartian merely states the sacrifice of Plautianus to the displeasure of his master, without the mention of any particulars.

which deformed the character of this able prince, and which his son studiously encouraged. Useful laws, however, were enacted in this reign; and a reform of various abuses testified some regard for justice. Respectable and upright citizens were in general chosen to fill the seats of magistracy, and to preside over the different provinces. Judicial corruption, official misconduct, and public delinquency, were checked by severity of punishment; and a rigorous *police* secured the rights of property, and preserved order and tranquillity<sup>13</sup>. Yet this security did not constantly or universally prevail; for a leader of banditti, named Bulas, harassed Italy for two years, in defiance of all the endeavours of the magistrates and soldiery for the repression of his predatory career: but he was at length betrayed by a female with whom he associated, surprised while he was sleeping in a cave, condemned by Papinian, and publickly torn in pieces by wild beasts<sup>14</sup>.

After a long respite from war, the emperor was prompted, by the danger to which the provincial territories in Britain were exposed, to undertake an expedition to this island. Even in the decline of life, he cherished a desire of military fame; and he had an additional motive for engaging in the new war. His two sons had been so corrupted by the pleasures of Rome, that he wished for an opportunity of reclaiming them by the discipline of a camp; and, thus impelled, he made great preparations, and safely transported his army from Gaul.

A. D.

208.

For the subjugation of the northern part of the island, after having settled the affairs of the south, the aged emperor began his march in the spring with Bassianus, whose brother Geta remained in the provincial division. He had no opportunity of deciding the contest by a general engagement. The barbarians of the north harassed him with desultory attacks, intercepted

A. D.

209.

13 Spart. Vit. Severi.

14 Xiphil. Hist.

his supplies, and cut off his detachments. Marshes, through which the enemy passed with scarcely a sensation of inconvenience, suited not the heavy armour and less robust frames of the legionaries. The woods, which at that time abounded in North-Britain, obstructed their progress: the frequent crossing of rivers, and marching over mountains, presented to their view both difficulty and danger. Yet their leader was not discouraged; and, if *he* did not complain of hardship, *they* did not think themselves justified in declining the arduous service. Having advanced far beyond the rampart of Antoninus, if not to the extremity of the island, he listened to an application for peace, which he had before rejected; and the North-Britons purchased the favor by the resignation of a part of their country. Yet, after mature deliberation, he deemed it unnecessary to retain any portion of territory beyond the Tyne or the Solway frith; and, therefore, erected a strong wall across the island<sup>15</sup>, near Hadrian's line of fortification. He, at this time, labored under a severe indisposition, which was increased by the anxiety of his mind; for, though he was an affectionate father, his life was endangered by the unnatural cruelty of Bassianus, who attempted to murder him even within view of the army. Shocked at this atrocity, he summoned the daring offender to a conference in his tent, in the presence of Papinian and of Castor, his respectable chamberlain. After expostulation and reproach, he said, producing a sword, "If you wish for my death, you are now at liberty to gratify your desire; for I am old and infirm, and cannot, in the course of nature, live long: or, if you are not disposed to perpetrate the foul murder with your own hand, command Papinian to be your agent. He will obey you, because, being my associate in power, you have a right to demand his submission to your will."



Bassianus did not endeavour to justify himself; and, on the other hand, Severus, although he blamed Marcus Aurelius for having suffered Commodus to live, and had repeatedly threatened to execute justice upon his own son, forbore to punish the late outrageous attempt<sup>16</sup>.

The North-Britons, concluding that the emperor's illness would secure them from vigorous hostility, and that his two sons, being rivals for political power, would not attend to the concerns of war, took arms in violation of the treaty. Their perfidy so enraged Severus, that he menaced them with extirpation: but his feeble state precluded him from action. His medical attendants and his domestics were urged by Bassianus to hasten his dissolution by poison or by open violence<sup>17</sup>: but they disdained compliance, and left their sovereign to the chance of a natural death, which was in some measure accelerated by the shock of filial ingratitude and the dread of parricidal outrage. He died in the sixty-sixth year of his Feb. 4, age; and his sons, between whom an irreconcilable discord had long prevailed, instantly became more 211. open enemies, in defiance of his earnest recommendation of fraternal union.

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## LETTER XV.

### *History of the Reigns of CARACALLA, MACRINUS, and ELAGABALUS.*

AN equality of power can only subsist in full force, when both the participators are free from inordinate ambition. Bassianus<sup>1</sup>, thinking himself entitled by primogeniture to the sole sovereignty, resolved to take the first opportunity of extinguishing, by sanguinary violence, the competi-

<sup>16</sup> Xiphil. Hist.

<sup>17</sup> Herod. lib. iii. cap. 15.

<sup>1</sup> Also called Antoninus and Caracalla, and supposed, upon visionary grounds, to be the Caracul of Ossian. He derived the former name from the

tion of Geta. To a prince who did not consider even a father's life as sacred, the blood of a brother seemed to be rather an innocent libation at the shrine of power, than an act of flagitious atrocity. In his puerile years, he had exhibited an appearance of mildness and benevolence, and was supposed by the courtiers to have a tender heart : but, on his approach to adolescence, he assumed a sternness of aspect, became haughty and arrogant in his demeanor, and manifested a strong propension to cruelty. He was much more destitute of feeling than his severe and inhuman father ; to whom he was, at the same time, greatly inferior in ability, judgement, and learning.

The legionaries, considering it as the wish of Severus that his sons should reign in conjunction, resisted the endeavours of Bassianus for the acquisition of undivided power. He therefore dissembled, for a time, his ambitious views, and pretended to share the sovereignty with Geta. A pacification being concluded with the British barbarians, who gave hostages for their good behaviour to the provincials of the island, the two brothers returned to Italy with Julia, the widow of Severus. They were received with an equality of acclamation ; and, having celebrated with signal pomp the *apotheosis* of their father, they exercised their authority amidst the quiet submission of an enslaved people<sup>2</sup>.

Renewing his intrigues with the soldiery, Bassianus still found them unwilling to support him against his brother ; and, indeed, if the free choice of one emperor had been left to the nation, the preference would have been

regard which his father professed for the imperial philosopher Marcus, and the latter from a Gallic robe which he was fond of wearing.

It is affirmed, in the Universal History, that Severus, by his *last will*, " appointed his sons to reign jointly after his death." But, although Zosimus speaks of such an appointment, it is not expressly mentioned either by Herodian or by Xiphilin ; and Spartian, in the life of Caracalla, says, that the army named one for the supreme dignity, and Severus the other.

<sup>2</sup> Herod. lib. iii. cap. 15 ; iv. 1, 2.

given to Geta, who had a sense of honor and humanity, a complacency and affability of demeanor, and, though fond of pleasure, was not vicious or depraved<sup>3</sup>.

In the progress of the contest, a proposal was made for a division of the empire. It was suggested, that the elder brother should rule over Europe and a part of Africa, and that the Asiatic provinces, with the addition of Egypt, should be assigned to the younger. If this separation of territory had been settled by mutual agreement, Bassianus would soon have encroached upon his brother's portion, and would have been equally bent upon his destruction. Julia warmly opposed the scheme, and earnestly exhorted the princes to reign in concord and union, rather than adopt an impolitic partition<sup>4</sup>.

When the two emperors had for some time thwarted and counter-acted each other in elections and appointments, in judicial proceedings, and in every kind of public business, the determined cruelty of Bassianus brought the contest to a close. He professed a strong A. D. 212. desire of reconciliation; and persuaded Julia to invite her son to an interview. Geta obeyed the call, and met his treacherous brother; at whose command, several centurions rushed into the apartment, assaulted the unsuspecting prince, and stabbed him even in the arms of his mother<sup>5</sup>. Bassianus immediately fled to the camp, and endeavoured to convince the prætorians that Geta had conspired against his life; but (said he), "My fellow-soldiers, I have escaped the alarming danger; and I now trust to your protection. You shall share my ample treasures; and with you I will live and die." As soon as they were informed of the truth, which could not long be concealed from them, many wished to revenge the death of their favorite; but the promise of a copious do-

<sup>3</sup> Herod. lib. iv.—Spartian speaks of his rough manners, *moribus asperis*: but they were probably smoothed by his intercourse with the world.

<sup>4</sup> Herod. lib. iv. cap. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Xiphil. Hist.



native, and the hope of farther indulgence, allayed their resentment, and even attached them to the murderous emperor. He not only augmented their pay and their allowance of corn, but dissipated, in immediate gifts to them and to other branches of the army, that treasure which his father's extortions had swelled to an enormous amount. Surrounding the senate-house with troops, he procured the acquiescence of the intimidated members in his sole sovereignty, and compelled them to thank the Gods for having saved him from the sanguinary machinations of Geta<sup>6</sup>.

His triumph over his brother, which he represented as equally just and necessary with that of Romulus over Remus, was followed by scenes of murder, which filled Rome with consternation and horror. The slightest connexion with the murdered prince operated as a death-warrant. All the members of his household were put to death; every link of that extensive chain of dependence which his rank commanded, was cruelly broken. The most dignified of his friends, and the lowest of his domestics, were equally involved in his fate. Many who had no other knowledge of him than mere personal observation, suffered death for deploring his catastrophe. Even the sanctity and innocence of the Vestal virgins did not secure them; for some of their number were buried alive, for lamenting the fate of an unfortunate prince<sup>7</sup>. Those performers in the public sports and theatrical exhibitions, who, by their skill, dexterity, and talents, had amused Geta, or had been occasionally honored with his approbation, were sacrificed to the sweeping vengeance of the tyrant; and, at the games of the Circus, many of the spectators were put to death, by the mere wantonness of power. It is said, that 20,000 individuals, women and children included, were murdered, under the pretence of their being the

6 Herod. lib. iv. cap. 4, 5.—Spart. Vit. Antonini Carac.

7 Herod. lib. iv. cap. 6.

friends of the young emperor<sup>8</sup>. How basely servile must the Romans have been, who could tamely suffer a brutal despot to perpetrate such execrable atrocities!

One of the most virtuous and respectable men in the empire suffered in this dreadful massacre. Papinian, who had in vain endeavoured, with all the authority of his high character, to soften the asperity of Bassianus, and reconcile him to his brother, was desired to vindicate, in a public oration, the sacrifice of Geta, as an act of self-defence: but, scorning to violate his conscience, he replied, "It is much more difficult to excuse or palliate a parricidal ~~fact~~ act, than to commit it." He was instantly beheaded; and his son was not suffered to survive him<sup>9</sup>.

The emperor, having rendered himself at Rome an object of detestation, resolved to visit the provinces subject to his sway. To Gaul he first directed his steps; A. D. and in that country he prosecuted a course, not <sup>213.</sup> only of the most oppressive rapine, but also of diabolical cruelty. A severe illness excited, among the harassed provincials, a hope of his death: but, unfortunately for his people, he recovered by the sedulous care of his physicians, whom he soon after put to death, as if they had been negligent of his health. On his return to Rome, he ridiculously appeared in a Gallic robe or cassock, which he strongly recommended for the use of his subjects; and, as he punished the least mark of disrespect, he probably murdered some of the people for not adopting his favorite dress.

Called into the field by the hostilities of some German nations, he exhibited some instances of courage, A. D. but disgraced himself by purchasing peace;—an <sup>214.</sup> act of great imprudence, which exposed the provincials to the attacks of other barbarian communities, or obliged him to prevent incursions and ravages by constant subsi-

dies. His next campaign was in Dacia, whence he expelled some hordes of Goths<sup>10</sup>.

Elate with his military exploits, he fancied himself equal to Alexander the Great, of whom he was so warm an admirer, that he ordered statues of that hero to be fixed in all the temples of Rome, and in other great cities, near the representations of his own person. He appeared in the dress and accoutrements of the conqueror of Darius, and established in his army a select *corps*, which he denominated the Macedonian phalanx. He was also a great panegyrist of Hannibal and of Sylla, whose statues he exhibited for public admiration; but he only resembled those celebrated generals in their cruelty. Having passed the Hellespont, he repaired to Ilium, to manifest his respect for the memory of another renowned votary of Mars. He decorated with flowers the tomb of Achilles; and, one of his freed-men dying at the time, he burned his body with ceremonial pomp, imitating the behaviour of the Grecian hero at the funeral of his lamented friend Patroclus<sup>11</sup>.

In his progress through Asia Minor, he continued to excite murmurs and horror by rapine and bloodshed. He  
 A. D. at length arrived at Antioch, where he made pre-  
 216. parations for a war with the Parthians, whom, he thought, he might attack with little danger, as they were involved in civil dissensions: but a submissive application from the reigning prince induced him to postpone his invasion of the realm. In the mean time, he invited to his court the kings of Armenia and Edessa, and detained them with views of interested ambition. The latter prince readily submitting to him, he planted a colony in his capital: but the Armenians routed the troops that were sent against them, and secured the rights of their sovereign<sup>12</sup>.

10 The Goths being also called *Geta*, Pertinax (son of that emperor whom the prætorians had assassinated) said sarcastically, "As it is customary for "princes to take appellatives from the conquered, let our sovereign be called "*Geticus*;"—alluding, at the same time, to his murderous triumph over Geta.

11 Herod. lib. iv. cap. 8.

12 Xiphil. Hist.



Removing his court to the Egyptian capital, he exceeded, if possible, his former iniquity. The people of Alexandria had evinced a greater regard for Geta than for Caracalla, whose fratricidal cruelty they had ventured to reprobate, and whose folly and eccentricity they had presumed to deride. For these animadversions he could justly blame himself alone: no one deserved death for this freedom of speech. But his perverted mind entertained a different opinion. The offence, he thought, could only be expiated by torrents of blood. To amuse and delude the inhabitants, he offered sacrifices to their god Serapis, and funeral honors to the great founder of their city. These solemnities inspired general joy, and excluded all suspicion of the dark machinations of the treacherous tyrant. Expressing a wish for the enlistment of an additional phalanx, which should take it's name from Alexander, he commanded all the young men to meet in a spacious plain, that he might select a certain number for the intended *corps*. He examined many of them with seeming attention, and put various questions to them, until his army had gradually surrounded them. He then retired to a temple, and gave the signal for a massacre. No respectable soldiers would have obeyed him; but the ruffians in his service were ready to commit the most atrocious enormities. He encouraged them by profuse liberality to the execution of his most iniquitous orders: he won their favor by the performance of the lowest duties of a common legionary, and by the cultivation of coarse familiarity with the meanest followers of the camp. Thus courted and rewarded, the soldiers eagerly rushed like wild beasts upon their prey. They not only slew all whom they had encompassed, but ran into every part of the city for the same diabolical purpose. The slaughter was not intermitted even during the night; and, on the following day, the same horrible scene was repeated. The city was then plundered; it's fraternities or privileged com-

panies were suppressed; and the surviving inhabitants were debarred from the gratification of public spectacles, and kept in constant terror by a strong garrison<sup>13</sup>.

A war with the Parthians being still meditated by the imperial assassin, he sent a deputation to propose himself as the son-in-law of their king Artabanus, with whom, he said, he wished to form that close alliance which might enable the two nations to subdue the rest of the world. The answer was a refusal, drawn from a consideration of the great difference of manners and customs among the subjects of the two princes: but a second and more earnest application relaxed the firmness of Artabanus; and the emperor was invited to Ctesiphon, to receive the hand of the Parthian princess. Advancing with his troops toward that city, he met the king on a spacious plain, and observed, with a malignant eye, a multitude of rejoicing Parthians, who, not having the least suspicion of danger, were neither mounted nor armed. Pleased at this opportunity of aggression, he ordered his men to attack the throng, as if none but enemies were before them. Confounded at this treachery, the Asiatics fled with precipitation; and the king with difficulty escaped. Many lost their lives; others were carried off into captivity. The perfidious legionaries then ravaged the country to a great extent, committing such atrocities as might have been expected from that attachment which they professed for their infamous employer; who, when he began to dread the vengeance of an insulted and injured nation, returned into Mesopotamia, and sent an express to the senate, declaring that he had completely subdued the Parthian realm, and had entitled himself to the honors of a legitimate and glorious triumph. The assembly knew that this assertion was a gross falsehood; yet the honors which he desired were readily decreed to him. The sensations of fear instantly produced flattery and submission<sup>14</sup>.

13 Herod. lib. iv. cap. 8, 9.—Xiphil.—Spart.

14 Herod. lib. iv. cap. 10, 11.

Although the emperor's chief friends were in the army, he found some enemies among the officers. Opilius Macrinus, one of the prætorian præfects, being reproached by him with a want of warlike spirit, because he lived too luxuriously for a soldier, and seemed to be more attached to civil than to military concerns,—and being even menaced with death for neglect of duty,—felt all the keenness of resentment, and all the anxiety of alarm. At the same time, the superstitious curiosity of Caracalla prompted him to consult astrologers and magicians with regard to his future fate; and he wrote to Maternianus, who acted as prime minister at Rome, desiring him to employ the most experienced men of the prophetic tribe in researches into the probable duration of his power, and the danger to which he might be exposed by treasonable machinations. The minister, after the farce of inquiry, pointed out Macrinus as the traitor whom his master had the greatest reason to fear, and therefore advised that the præfect should be immediately put to death. The communications of Maternianus, being sent with other letters into Mesopotamia, reached the emperor when he was on the point of engaging in a chariot-race. Unwilling to delay his diversion, he delivered the packet to Macrinus, who, suppressing that epistle which was hostile to himself, stated to his sovereign the purport of the rest. Dreading a repetition of the minister's advice, the præfect formed a scheme of tyrannicide with Martialis, a centurion, who had been insulted and reviled by Caracalla, and whose brother, without proof of delinquency, had fallen a victim to despotic cruelty. An opportunity of accomplishing the scheme soon occurred. The emperor April 8,  
217. was on his way, with a small train, to a temple at Carrhæ; and, having an urgent occasion of retiring, he was followed by only one attendant. Martialis ran toward him, as if he had been called to receive instructions, and gave him a mortal wound. Some German horsemen, who



belonged to the imperial guard, revenged the murder by the death of the centurion, while he was endeavouring to escape by the fleetness of his horse<sup>15</sup>.

Macrinus, not being suspected of a concern in the conspiracy, was supposed to be sincere in his public lamentation over the body of Caracalla. He condoled with the soldiers upon the loss which they had sustained, without giving the smallest hint of a wish to succeed the murdered prince. Audentius, his colleague in the præfecture, was requested to assume the imperial dignity; but he declined it, as a task too burthensome for his advanced age. Macrinus was then proposed; and he did not reject the offer. As the Romans had a great respect for the name of Antoninus, he gave that appellation to his son Diadumenianus, whom he introduced to the army as his associate in power; and presents were lavished, in the names of both, upon the military electors.

The martial talents of Macrinus, not indeed very considerable, were soon called into exercise. Artabanus, breathing vengeance for the flagitious treachery of Caracalla, advanced with a numerous army. The Parthian archers did great execution among the legionaries, who were also severely harassed by the long spears of the horsemen and camel-riders: but, by putting iron spikes under the sand, the Romans so far disabled many of the quadrupeds, that the men were thrown off, and easily slain or made prisoners. The battle raged for two days, before the enemy received intelligence of the tyrant's death: but, as soon as Artabanus was informed, by the new emperor, of the change which had occurred, he consented to a treaty of peace, on the restoration of the captives and spoils<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Herod. lib. iv. cap. 12, 13;—Xiphil.

<sup>16</sup> Herod. lib. iv. cap. 14, 15.—Xiphilin says, that Macrinus purchased peace by the grant of fifty millions of drachmas, about 1,600,000 pounds sterling.

The choice of an emperor from the equestrian order (for Macrinus was not a member of the senate) was a novelty in the annals of Rome; and the mean origin from which he had risen even to that dignity, could not easily be forgotten. The senate, however, considering him as a man of some merit, and exulting in the death of Caracalla, readily confirmed the legionary appointment, and annulled the acts of the hated tyrant; some of whose friends were immediately put to death, and others banished. Upon the informers, by whose accusations many had suffered in the late reign, severe vengeance was now taken; for such as were slaves were crucified, and the lives of others were not spared.

Macrinus would have better consulted his interest by distributing his army in many stations, and returning to Rome, than by remaining at Antioch with his force nearly congregated. The assembled troops had constant opportunities of indulging in the freedom of mutual remark, and of propagating the murmurs of discontent. While he promised a continuance of the privileges and high pay allowed by his predecessor, he excited suspicion and disgust by excluding, from these favors, all who might thenceforward be enlisted for the purpose of recruiting the legions. The severity with which he punished offenders, exposed him to odium; and his military character was not so high as to shield him from contempt. While he wallowed in luxury, he obliged the soldiers to live in tents; and they complained of not being sufficiently supplied with the necessaries of life. Dissatisfaction gradually diffused itself among them; and, when his concern in the murder of Caracalla was discovered, their disgust was accompanied with a height of indignation, which portended a speedy revolt.

An artful and ambitious female roused to action the disaffected troops. Julia, the mother of Caracalla, having offended Macrinus by the reproaches which she had

thrown out against him for depriving her even of an unworthy son, although he had not taken away her guard or curtailed her establishment, was commanded to retire from Antioch, that she might not inflame the discontent of the army. Her wounded pride concurred with bodily sufferings (for she had a cancer in her breast) to render her so weary of life, that she refused to take that sustenance which was necessary for it's preservation<sup>17</sup>. She had a sister named Mæsa, who, after Julia's death, was ordered by the emperor to return to Emesa, her native town, without being dispossessed of any part of the great wealth which she had acquired in the two last reigns by her high connexions and interest. Mæsa had a grandson, who officiated as priest of the sun, and was called *Elagabalus* from the Syrian appellation of that luminary. He had no other recommendation than that of personal beauty, which is certainly a very insufficient qualification for sovereignty: but the persuasions and the bribes of his grandmother, operating upon the dissatisfied minds of the soldiery, who were taught to believe that Caracalla was the secret father of the youth, produced a public declaration against Macrinus. Being introduced to a military detachment cantoned near Emesa, Elagabalus was saluted emperor by the name of Antoninus, when he was only in the fifteenth year of his age<sup>18</sup>.

This revolt did not appear in a very formidable light to Macrinus, who was not fully aware of the contempt or the odium which he had incurred. He spoke of his competitor as a despicable boy, whose elevation was solely produced by the meanness of bribery: but he soon found that the power of the youthful rebel was too great to be easily withstood. The troops sent to quell the insurrection were quickly seduced from their allegiance. They murdered Julian their commander, and joined Elagabalus; to whose

17 Xiphil. Hist. 18 Herod. lib. v. cap. 4—6. —Jul. Capitol. Vit. Macrini.



camp parties daily flocked from the imperial standard. At length the two rivals met, with views of decisive hostility. Macrinus showed less courage in this conflict <sup>June 7,</sup> than even Mæsa or her daughter, who, when <sup>218.</sup> they observed the revoltors giving way in some parts of the field, leaped from their chariots, and rallied the recoiling battalions. The desertion of a multitude of legionaries from the ruling prince aided the renewed efforts of the partisans of the young Phœnician, to whom a complete victory devolved <sup>19.</sup>

The emperor pusillanimously fled before the fortune of the day was decided. His principal friends were of opinion, that, if he had remained to animate the troops, he might have defeated his opponents : but his early retreat cooled their zeal. He was overtaken by his pursuers after a long chase, and put to death : his son was also seised and murdered.

If the senate had not been over-awed by the army, such a candidate as now appeared would not have been chosen emperor : but the assembly submitted to the power of the sword, and acknowledged the pretensions of Elagabalus. His inadequacy to the task of government was soon apparent even to the most careless observer. He had no dignity of mind or strength of understanding : he was too indolent to attend to the duties of his exalted station : his morals were depraved ; his example was pernicious. Deaf to the voice of reason, he attended only to the calls of passion. Destitute of all regard for decency and all sense of shame, he publicly abandoned himself to the most degrading sensualities, and gloried in the most unnatural and infamous practices. He distributed the most important offices among the infamous ministers of his debaucheries ; discountenanced or neglected all men of ability and merit ; insulted the nation by every species of misgovern-

ment; and outraged the public feelings by a series of oppression. He even put many citizens to death, merely for hinting their disapprobation of his conduct, or because he suspected that they could not be pleased with his administration.

Amidst his abominable enormities, he affected a sense of religion. He professed the highest regard for the Syrian God, in whose worship he had officiated as priest, and commanded his subjects to prefer that object of devotion to every other Deity<sup>20</sup>. He robbed some of the principal temples of their sacred ornaments, which he transferred to a new structure, erected to his divine favorite upon the Palatine hill. These insults to the religion of Rome were highly offensive; and sacrilege embittered the odium which wanton tyranny had excited. Yet the government of this unworthy and even execrable prince continued to be tolerated. He did not, indeed, reign for many years; but one month was too long for the sway of such a base and profligate tyrant.

While he attended to every thing except his duty, he encouraged his mother to ridicule the government by the institution of a female senate, for the regulation of dress, of the forms of salutation and the modes of behaviour, of precedence, and other *minutiæ*. He erected a hall for these frivolous consultations; and we may suppose, that he occasionally witnessed the desultory discussions. He was sometimes present at debates of a more reprehensible nature; for he assembled a great number of prostitutes, and ordered them to devise the best means of improving amorous gratifications; and, that they might be favored with a variety of hints, he introduced some voluptuaries of his own sex. His only companions were persons of this description; and, the more dissolute and depraved they were, the more agreeable they became to their patron.

<sup>20</sup> To this divinity, in imitation of the Phœnician practice, he even offered human victims, selected from the patrician youth. *Lampridius*.

He expended, with the most wanton profusion, the revenues of the empire, and the confiscated property of those citizens whom he sacrificed at the shrine of despotism. In costly parade, and luxurious ostentation, he exceeded the most prodigal of his predecessors. A robe of the finest silk, embroidered with gold, and decorated with precious stones, formed his ordinary apparel; and he changed his dress with the most extravagant frequency. Upon every finger he had a valuable ring; he wore the most elegant bracelets; his shoes were enriched with sculptured gems; and, when he moved from his palace to enter his carriage, or to mount a horse, the way was strewn with dust of gold or silver. His tables, chairs, and other articles of domestic furniture, consisted of pure gold: he used for fuel the stalks of aromatic plants; and his beds were covered with cloth of gold, and stuffed with the most expensive down. He studied the art of cookery with the luxurious zeal of an Apicius, and gratified his palate with the most delicate fare. He bathed his august person in pools of perfumed wine, and mingled the most refined luxury with the grossest debauchery<sup>21</sup>.

His grandmother, apprehending that he would not be suffered to enjoy a long reign, resolved to recommend a successor to the public notice. She fixed upon his cousin Alexianus, the son of her daughter Mamæa, and had sufficient influence to procure an edict, dignifying him with the title of Cæsar. On this occasion, the favored youth assumed the designation of Alexander Se-  
A. D. 221.  
verus; and he prepared himself, by a regular course of education, for the functions of government and policy. The dissolute emperor endeavoured to draw him into the vortex of dissipation; and, when he found all such efforts fruitless, viewed him with a malignant eye, and resolved to blast his hopes of the succession: but the friends of



Alexander, and the prætorians, formed a strong bulwark around him. Finding that emissaries were employed to murder him, the soldiers rushed into the palace, and, having led the endangered youth to the camp, returned in search of the tyrant, whom they threatened with exemplary vengeance, if he would not instantly dismiss his profligate companions and unprincipled advisers. He reluctantly acquiesced in their demands; and the tumult subsided.

The life of Alexander was still insecure; for the emperor did not relinquish his murderous intention. He declared the youth joint consul, but would not suffer him to perform the duties of the office. It was a mere show of favor, without the reality of reconciliation or of concert. To sound the inclinations of the prætorians, and ascertain how far he might proceed with safety, he pretended that his cousin was so ill as to be at the point of death. The officers, suspecting his views, refused to send him the usual guard, and desired that his popular relative might be immediately brought to the camp. Over-awed by this instance of spirit, he repaired with Alexander to the military station. While he was treated with contempt, his colleague was received with loud acclamations and general respect;—a contrast which so offended the emperor's pride, that he ordered the most forward applauders of the youth to be put to death, not considering that he was in the power of those who wished for an opportunity of rescuing the nation from tyranny and disgrace. Many of the soldiers advanced toward him with looks of indignation, and so intimidated him by menaces, that he fled in all the agony of terror. He was eagerly pursued, and quickly overtaken; and, while his mother held him in her embrace, both were justly punished with death for  
March 10, 222. their multiplied acts of oppression and outrage. The depraved voluptuaries, who had domineered in the cabinet, were not suffered to escape the fate of their ma-

ister; and the youth whom they had endeavoured to destroy, was elevated to the imperial dignity by the unanimous votes of the army and the senate<sup>22</sup>.

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## LETTER XVI.

*History of the ROMAN Empire, during the Reigns of Alexander Severus, Maximin, and the Gordians.*

THE gloom of tyranny was dispelled by the en-  
livening prospect of just and humane govern-  
ment. Alexander was a youth of promising talents and  
virtuous habits; and, while he gave indications of those  
abilities which were calculated for the government of the  
state, he seemed to possess that courage which could de-  
fend it.

He commenced his reign with the nomination of a committee of sixteen senators, without whose advice no important measures were adopted<sup>1</sup>. He was guided in this appointment by the suggestions of his mother and grandmother, who, having super-intended his education with the greatest care, and being considered as women of sense and judgement, were honored with his gratitude, respect, and reverence. At the head of the new council was Ulpian, the celebrated civilian, who was, at the same time, captain of the imperial guard. Some of his political associates were highly distinguished by their learning; and every one of the number enjoyed the reputation of ability and of worth. A reform of the court was the first object of these ministers: the next was the extension of equitable sway to all parts of the empire. Abuses and grievances were corrected and redressed; incompetent and

<sup>22</sup> Herod. lib. v.—Lamprid.—Xiphil.

<sup>1</sup> Herod. lib. vi, cap. 1.

profligate officers and corrupt judges were dismissed, and some were punished with exile; while persons of acknowledged merit were selected for the public service. The senate-house, purged of base intruders, again became a seat of authoritative decision; and the wisdom of the assembly had it's due influence in political and legislative concerns. None but intelligent and respectable men could procure admission, as substitutes of the excluded senators; for the candidates were required to produce favorable testimonials of their characters, and were not received without the unanimous approbation of the attendant members. In the appointment of provincial governors, only those citizens were selected by the emperor, whom no one could criminate; and similar strictness attended the supply of other important vacancies. No offices were suffered to be sold; for the prince considered that species of traffic as disgraceful to his government, and injurious to the people. Those who discharged their functions with exemplary propriety were rewarded for their conduct, but not to an excess that was inconsistent with economy, or preclusive of that relief, in point of taxation, which the public had reason to expect from a just and disinterested sovereign<sup>2</sup>.

Thus Alexander and his patriotic counsellors proceeded, restoring order, distributing justice, and promoting the general welfare. When some years had passed in these tranquil pursuits, the horizon of Rome exhibited an aspect of turbulence. The strictness with which Ulpian enforced order and discipline, although it did not involve merciless severity, excited the general disgust of the prætorians, and particularly inflamed the resentment of Epagathus, one of their officers, who could not brook even legitimate control. The people being more disposed to approve than to condemn the conduct of the præfect, sanguinary



dissensions arose between them and the troops, and the opposite parties even fought for three days. Not being successful in these conflicts, the prætorians vented their rage in conflagration; and the people, to prevent the mischievous extension of the flames, made overtures of accommodation, to which the soldiers agreed<sup>3</sup>. This reconciliation, far from being cordial, did not secure Ulpian from military vengeance. He was assaulted in the night, and murdered in his flight to the palace<sup>4</sup>. The danger of punishing Epagathus in the centre of his influence induced the emperor to send him to Egypt, on pretence of employing him in the government of that province; but, being removed to Crete, the assassin was subjected to the doom which he deserved.

A. D.  
228.

A spirit of mutiny continued to inflame the licentious prætorians; and the same repugnance to the ancient discipline diffused itself among the provincial legions. Disturbances in various camps and stations marked the rising discontent; and, when these commotions had apparently subsided, others were constantly dreaded by the friends of the court and the advocates of tranquillity.

Alexander was still popular; but his tame submission to the will of his mother threatened him with a serious decline of public favor. Mamæa was sordidly avaricious, and sometimes cruel; and, as her influence over her son was notorious<sup>5</sup>, many were ready to censure him, and to arraign his administration, when they witnessed any reprehensible acts, which were supposed to proceed from her advice. With all his boasted mildness, he was, on some occasions, inhumanly severe<sup>6</sup>; and his acts of rigor, being loudly condemned by his military enemies, were rendered subservient to the propagation of discontent.

3 Xiphil. Hist.

4 Zosim. lib. i. sect. 11.—Xiphil.

5 He even suffered her to banish his wife, and to put his father-in-law to death, upon the idle pretence of a conspiracy. *Herodian*.

6 His panegyrical biographer Lampridius admits, that he was *durus et tetricus*.

In the hope of being supported by the army, some competitors for the sovereignty offered themselves to general notice. Uranius endeavoured to procure that dignity to which he had no pretensions; but his views were easily baffled; and Camillus, who aimed at the same honor, was indulged by Alexander with an appearance of power, until he was persuaded to resign it. Two citizens, who were less ambitious, were brought forward by the soldiers; one at Rome, the other in Syria. Both manifested their reluctance by flight; and the former found security in concealment, while the latter drowned himself in the Euphrates.

The intrigues and attempts of the mal-contented did not intimidate or depress the emperor, who had reason to believe that his government was acceptable to the senate and the majority of the people. He pursued his course for several years without farther commotions, before he found himself involved in an Asiatic war. A revolution had occurred in Persia; and its effects appeared in the alarming form of a fierce invasion.

Artaxerxes, a military adventurer, the son of Sassan, erected the standard of rebellion against Artabanus, king of Parthia; and, affirming that he was a descendant of the Persian kings, he so extensively propagated his influence, that a numerous body of the people resolved to support his pretensions. Ably directing the exertions of his followers, he obtained three victories over the troops of Artabanus<sup>7</sup>; and the fall or the murder of the vanquished king extinguished the Parthian power<sup>8</sup>. The victor seized the throne; and, when he had quelled all opposition in the provinces, he declared his intention of re-annexing to the Persian dominion all the territories which Cyrus had pos-

7 In the year 226

8 Xiphil. Hist.—Agath.—The Parthian monarchy corresponds with the Ashkanian dynasty of some Persian writers; while others place two dynasties between the Caianian and Sassanian series of princes.

sessed. Alexander, in a spirited epistle, advised the new king to content himself with the present extent of his realm, and warned him of the terrors and dangers of Roman vengeance. Despising the admonition, A. D.  
Artaxerxes invaded Mesopotamia with a great 232-  
army; and, meeting with no opposition in the open country, he insultingly ravaged and plundered the province<sup>9</sup>.

Alexander did not pusillanimously shrink from the contest, or indolently resign to his generals the defence of the empire. Having ordered a respectable force to be levied, he announced his intention of acting personally against the invaders, and seemed to promise himself the most splendid success. The senate lamented the necessity of his departure; and many of the people shed tears, when they witnessed his incipient march. Nothing could exceed the systematic regularity with which the expedition was conducted. The emperor's disciplinarian strictness impressed the soldiers with awe; while his attention to the supply of their wants allayed the disgust which his severity aroused. When he had transported his legions into Asia, he passed some months at Antioch, augmenting his force, and organising all the means of vigorous hostility.

During his residence in this city, he was informed that many of his soldiers had indulged in dissolute pleasures at Daphne, and had even bathed with prostitutes. Incensed at these violations of discipline, of decorum, and morality, he imprisoned the offenders, and menaced them with exemplary punishment. A mutiny immediately arising, he boldly addressed the legion which clamorously countenanced the misconduct of its members, and, after a sharp rebuke, cried out, "Citizens, I dismiss you from that service which you have disgraced." Appalled by his firmness, the legionaries gave up their arms, and si-



lently retired. He was so pleased at their submission to his stern authority, that he restored them to their station; but his indignation hurried him into an act of cruelty; for he put their tribunes to death, merely for their negligence and temporary inattention to discipline<sup>10</sup>.

After a fruitless attempt to restore peace by negotiation, he commenced his march against the Persians. By a three-fold division of his force, he hoped to make such an impression as would secure an ultimate triumph. That part of his army which he sent into Armenia fought with some advantage; but the second division, advancing into Persia, received a ruinous defeat<sup>11</sup>, while Alexander lingered in Mesopotamia with the greater part of his force. The intelligence of this ill success concurred with the earnest persuasions of his mother to produce an order for a discontinuance of the expedition: yet he was not so discouraged as to meditate an entire dereliction of the war. When he was preparing

for a renewal of hostilities, he was informed that Artaxerxes had permitted or suffered the dispersion of the majority of his troops; and a report of European commotions, at the same time, induced him to desist from the Asiatic war.

As the devastation of the Gallic frontiers by the Germans more strongly alarmed the senate and citizens of Rome, than the remote hostilities of the Persians, the emperor resolved to exert his utmost efforts in defence of the provincials. But, when he had reached the banks of the Rhine, he had no opportunity of distinguishing him-

<sup>10</sup> Lamprid. Vit. Alex. Sev.

<sup>11</sup> Herod. lib. vi. cap. 5.—Zonar.—This account is corroborated by the best writers of Oriental history, but is controverted by Lampridius, who quotes the authority of the imperial records for a great victory on the part of the Romans. If such a victory had been obtained, the lustre which it would have thrown over the government of Alexander would, in all probability, have repressed that spirit of revolt which led to a most disgraceful transfer of the sovereignty.

self in the field. His occasional severity, and the avarice of his mother, excited such discontent among the troops, that a conspiracy was formed for his destruction.

Maximin, formerly a Thracian shepherd, had risen to legionary distinction; and, being considered as a very brave and skilful officer, he had been employed by Alexander in training the less experienced part of the army. Finding himself popular in the camp, he conceived the hope of extraordinary advancement; and, with little difficulty, he seduced the military malcontents into schemes of murderous violence. By a considerable body of legionaries, this barbarian was declared emperor; and his vile emissaries, surprising Alexander in his tent<sup>12</sup>, assassinated that prince and his mother. The unjustifiable <sup>March 19,</sup> and traitorous act was soon avenged by the death <sup>235.</sup> of the assassins<sup>13</sup>: yet the whole army consented to the elevation of the ungrateful officer who had instigated those ruffians to the murder of his patron and benefactor<sup>14</sup>.

An unpardonable insult was offered to the senate and the nation by the bold usurper, in acting as emperor by the mere will of the army, without deigning to consider the sanction of the venerable assembly as necessary to legalise his administration. This fact is mentioned with apparent indignation by the ancient historians; and it was certainly a violent breach in the rampart of the constitution.

Those who could revolt from such a prince as Alexander Severus deserved to be punished by the oppressive government of a Thracian savage, who was only qualified to be a leader of banditti: but, unfortunately, the insurrection of the soldiers in his favor tended, by it's success, to involve the unoffending part of the nation in the mi-

<sup>12</sup> Near Mentz.

<sup>13</sup> In this act of retaliative justice, even that legion which had been stigmatised at Antioch took a distinguished part.

<sup>14</sup> Herod. lib. vi.—Zosim. lib. i.—Lamprid.

series of tyrannic sway. He knew that the senate, and the people in general, highly disapproved his elevation to the throne of the Cæsars : he knew that he was despised for the meanness of his extraction, and hated for his cruelty ; but, instead of being induced, by the unfavorable opinion which was entertained of him, to soften his rusticity, and assume the demeanor of a gracious and moderate prince, he was urged by the baseness of his nature to govern with a rod of iron. He commenced his reign with acts of the most unjustifiable complexion. He put to death many of those who had known him when he lived in indigence and obscurity, that they might not view him with contempt<sup>15</sup>. No favors which he or his family had received from them, could substitute grateful feelings for the wounds which their early knowlege of him gave to his pride. He, at the same time, murdered some of the friends of his injured predecessor, and banished, degraded, or displaced the rest.

A dread of his inhuman despotism soon produced a conspiracy against him. Magnus, who had been honored with the consulate, and had some influence in the army, resolved to watch the movements of the barbarian emperor, and break down a bridge over the Rhine, in a wide and deep part of the stream, as soon as the tyrant had passed over it. The scheme was detected ; and above 4000 persons were put to death by Maximin, without trial or legal process, as if their concern in the plot had been indisputable. The positive mention of this conspiracy, as an historic incident, may not be correct ; but it is not improbable, although the writers by whom it is specified have added, that an opinion prevailed, imputing to Maximin the fabrication of the charge, with a view of obtaining a pretence for multiplied acts of sanguinary violence<sup>16</sup>.

A revolt soon after occurred in the camp, and a new

15 Jul. Capitol. Vit. Maxim.

16 Herod. lib. vii.—Jul. Capitol.



emperor was nominated: but the insurrection was too partial to have any effect to the prejudice of Maximin. The object of tumultuary choice was murdered by a pretended friend, who had advised him to accept the offered dignity, and who, in his turn, was put to death by the reigning prince.

By a vigorous campaign, Maximin hoped to convince both the army and the people of his eminent qualifications for imperial sway. He entered Germany A. D. 236. with many legions, and, not meeting the enemy in the field, ravaged the country to a great extent. The troops of some of the German states at length ventured to oppose him, and felt the effects of legionary valor and skill. Having given orders for the delineation of his chief exploits, and for the exhibition of these interesting pictures at Rome, he rested from his labors in Pannonia, with an intention of attacking the Sarmatians in the spring<sup>17</sup>.

The government of this base and unprincipled despot resembled the public conduct of Nero: it was a series of rapine and murder. He encouraged the vile race of informers, that such charges might be adduced against opulent citizens and provincials, as might lead to condemnation. Many of the most respectable subjects of the empire, without the smallest proof of guilt, were deprived of their property, and banished; while others were doomed to death. As the wealth thus acquired did not satisfy the avidity of the imperial robber, he pillaged the temples, and seised for his own use the public money in the principal cities, regardless of the general indignation which his unjustifiable conduct excited<sup>18</sup>.

When the Romans had submitted for two years to the tyranny of Maximin, some commotions at Carthage led the way to a revolt. The financial procurator A. D. 237. of the province imitated the violence and rapacity

17 Herod.—Capitol.

18 Zosim. lib. i.—Herod.

of his master ; and, in the course of his extortions, he adduced charges against several young men of opulent and noble families, that he might have a pretence for the seizure of their property. They requested a delay of three days, before the pecuniary demand should be enforced ; and, in that interval, they instigated the neighbouring rustics to take arms in their defence. Concealing their weapons, they approached the obnoxious officer, as if they intended to perform their promise. He did not suspect their real purpose, and was therefore unprepared to resist their violence. They stabbed him to the heart ; and the peasants, rushing forward, soon dispersed the soldiers, who attempted to revenge his death. In the hope of securing themselves against the tyrant's resentment, they resolved to make choice of a new emperor. The governor of the province was Gordian, a man of respectability and virtue, who had lived to his eightieth year in general estimation. He was then at Tysdra, wholly ignorant of the late conspiracy and assassination ; and, when the insurgents announced his election, he threw himself from his bed at the feet of their leaders, and urged them to excuse him from the dangerous elevation. As they threatened him with instant death, if he should refuse to protect them by an acceptance of the imperial authority, he consented to share the peril in which they had involved themselves, and suffered them to invest him with the purple<sup>19</sup>.

The aged proconsul, being conducted to Carthage with the pomp of sovereignty, sent a deputation to Rome, to request from the senate an acknowledgement of his authority, and to promise a restoration of just and equitable government, in lieu of the horrible tyranny which had lately prevailed. To the soldiers he held out the prospect of a more liberal donative than any former prince

had bestowed ; and the popular acquiescence was also to be rewarded with a bountiful largess. He, at the same time, sent the quæstor of the province to Rome, to take away the life of Vitalian, the prætorian præfect, from whose ferocity of character, and attachment to the tyrant, a determined opposition was apprehended. This officer deserved death for his cruelty ; but the treacherous mode in which it was inflicted cannot be approved. The quæstor and his attendants introduced themselves to him, as the bearers of instructions from his imperial friend, and thus found an opportunity of assassinating him. A report of the death of Maximin being then propagated, the people loudly expressed their joy ; demolished his statues ; put to death the chief ministers of his barbarity, and some of the accusers whom he had encouraged ; and, in the tumult of licentiousness, creditors were murdered by debtors, and many individuals were sacrificed to private revenge. Sabinus, the governor of the city, so highly offended the plebeian assassins by endeavouring to repress their outrages, that they beat him to death with clubs<sup>20</sup>.

The senate readily embraced the cause of Gordian, and immediately commissioned twenty of the members to provide for the defence of Italy against the attempts of the adherents of Maximin. Not only the proconsul was declared emperor by the assembly, but his son was associated with him in power and authority. Thanks were decreed to the inhabitants of Tysdra for opening the way to this revolution : Maximin and his son were solemnly devoted to the infernal deities, as enemies of mankind ; and rewards were offered for their heads. Instructions were sent to all the provincial governors to maintain the choice of the senate, and crush all who should dare to support the pretensions of an execrable barbarian.

20 Herod. lib. vii.—Capitol. Vit, Maxim. et Gord.



When Maximin was informed of these proceedings, he was inflamed with an excess of rage. He tore his robe, dashed his head against a wall, struck his attendants, and exhibited other marks of temporary phrensy. After two days of perplexity and indecision, he assembled his troops, and, with affected indifference, mentioned the revolt of the African province, under the auspices of a feeble doctard and an indolent voluptuary. He also treated with contempt the hostility of the senate, and trusted that his brave and faithful soldiers would soon overwhelm all opposition, and entitle themselves by their seasonable services to the ample spoils of their enemies. He then distributed a large sum among them, and gave orders for a speedy march to Italy.

The courage of Capelianus, and his personal animosity against Gordian, quickly suppressed the African revolt. The new emperor had sent one of his friends to supersede that officer in the government of Numidia, and to command his instant departure from the province. Capelianus defied the attempts of his intended successor; and, with a well-disciplined army, directed his march toward Carthage. Gordian sent out his son with a tumultuary and ill-armed force; and a battle quickly occurred, in which Capelianus obtained the victory. The son fell in the action; and the father hung himself in despair. Many of the vanquished were trodden to death by their associates, in the confusion of their flight; and the fury of the pursuers sacrificed a considerable number. The victorious general encouraged the rapacity and licentiousness of his soldiers, at Carthage and other towns, with a view of conciliating their support in an eventual assumption of the supreme power; and he gratified his own thirst of blood and spoil by numerous murders and confiscations.

Still intent upon a renunciation of the authority of Maximin, the senate granted the imperial dignity to Pu-

pianus Maximus and Balbinus. The former of these citizens had risen from a low station, by industry and merit, to military eminence and political distinction; and the latter, who was an opulent patrician, had governed many provinces without exciting the least complaint. Maximus was morose and strict, but not unjust or inhuman; Balbinus was mild and polite in his demeanor, a man of pleasure, an orator, and a poet.

The people were not altogether pleased at the new choice. They particularly objected to the appointment of Maximus, whose severity did not suit their taste; and they insisted on the promotion of a grandson of Gordian, denouncing sanguinary vengeance in case of refusal. To allay their discontent, the boy was produced, and honored with the title of Cæsar, the two emperors being authorised to act as his associates and guardians<sup>21</sup>.

At the commencement of the new reign, while the senators were employed in deliberation, some soldiers who had served under Maximin appeared in the midst of the hall. This irreverent curiosity was punished with unjustifiable and outrageous severity; or it may rather be said, that the harmless intrusion was alleged as a pretence for that cruelty which would otherwise have been exercised. Two of the members, Gallicanus and Mæcenas, stabbed the intruders; whose comrades, respectfully waiting at the door, were so intimidated, that they instantly fled. Gallicanus, rushing out with the blood-stained sword in his hand, instigated the populace to destroy the friends of Maximin, the enemies of the senate and the nation. The retiring soldiers were vigorously pursued, until they found refuge in the camp. A multitude of plebeians attacked that station without effect; and, when they at length retreated, a considerable number of the assailants lost their lives, with many gladiators who had joined them, in con-

<sup>21</sup> Capitol. Vit. Gord. et Maxima.

sequence of a *sortie* from the camp. When the siege was renewed, the defence was equally spirited. All the endeavours of Balbinus, for the restoration of peace and order, were fruitless; and, as Maximus, whose military fame might have over-awed the contending parties, had advanced with an army to oppose the tyrant, the intestine war proceeded to an alarming height. The people having diverted all supplies of water from the camp, all the soldiers left it, and rushed into the city, where, being harassed from the roofs with tiles and stones, they set fire to many of the houses; and the fury of the spreading flames destroyed as great a part of Rome as was equal to one of the largest provincial towns<sup>22</sup>.

Maximin, in the mean time, approached Italy with confident hopes of triumph. Finding a deserted town, he expressed his joy at the sight, and his wish to find others in the same state, without considering that the policy of removing every article of subsistence threatened him with famine. Many of his soldiers saw the *manœuvre* in it's true light, and ridiculed his idle joy. The gates of Aquileia being shut against him, he gave orders for a vigorous siege. The senators Crispinus and Menophilus, however, trusting to the courage of a numerous garrison, and to a copious stock of arms and provisions, were not appalled by his boastful menaces; nor were they seduced into submission by his persuasions, or his promises of clemency and pardon. His assaults were resisted with energy: his engines were rendered useless by well-aimed combustibles: showers of varied missiles severely galled his men; and these hostilities were embittered, to his irascible spirit, by the reproaches, taunts, and sarcasms, which the besieged poured forth against him and his son. His rage vented itself upon some of his principal officers, whom he doomed to death for a pre-



sumed deficiency of courage or of zeal. In the progress of the siege, his troops labored under a scarcity of provisions;—with such precaution and vigilance were all supplies intercepted or precluded by the new government. Dreading an increase of difficulty and of danger, and impressed also with a strong sense of the general odium which the conduct of their ruffian master had excited, those soldiers who had families near Rome conspired against him. They drew into their party the very men to whom he committed the protection of his person; and, entering his tent at mid-day, murdered both him and his son. The commander of his guard, and some of his principal friends, were at the same time put to death. The father deserved the utmost inflictions of divine and human vengeance: but the son had some claim to indulgence<sup>23</sup>.

The besiegers discontinued their operations, when the death of their leader was announced. The Pannonians and Thracians were inclined to resent that violence which had removed from the world the object of their favor and selection: but prudence checked their zeal; and they concurred with the rest of the army in making overtures of accommodation to the defenders of Aquileia. Crispinus promised forbearance and amity, on condition of their acknowledgement of the joint emperors. They submitted to the stipulation: and their urgent wants were immediately relieved.

An excess of joy was now manifested throughout Italy. Maximus, who was on the point of marching from Ravenna against the opposers of the senate, received with congratulations the soldiers who presented to him the head of his fierce adversary, and sent to Rome that acceptable trophy. The temples of the metropolis were immediately thronged with citizens; and sacrifices were profusely offered, announcing devout gratitude. Maximus hastened

to Aquileia, and flattered himself with the prospect of full submission on the part of the tyrant's army : but the respect with which he was greeted was confined to exterior forms. It was so far from being sincere, that the troops viewed with great disgust an emperor whom the senate had chosen without their concurrence, and secretly resolved to annihilate his authority. Balbinus, for the same reason, was an object of their resentment : but, as young Gordian had been brought forward by the people, the soldiery were willing to acquiesce in his sovereignty.

For the restoration of peace, the senate voted to Maximus an equestrian statue, and decreed other honors, which excited the envy of Balbinus, who boasted that he had as much concern as his colleague in the ruin of Maximin. To both these princes, a divided sway was unsatisfactory ; but they abstained from open discord, and governed the empire with equity and moderation. They promoted the enactment of judicious laws, decided causes with correctness and impartiality, and preserved general order and tranquillity.

That administration which ought to have secured to the emperors universal regard and esteem, did not mitigate the displeasure of the prætorians and their legionary associates ; and their indignation was inflamed by an insinuation which was thrown out in the senate. " Princes who  
" are wisely selected act thus : but those who are cho-  
" sen by the ignorant and uninformed part of the commu-  
" nity thus perish<sup>24</sup>." This allusion to the election and the fate of Maximin made a deep impression, the more particularly as it was founded in justice.

When the recurrence of games and sports engrossed the public attention, the mal-contents resolved to assassinate the senatorial emperors. Their machinations being suspected by Maximus, he summoned his German guards

to his aid ; but Balbinus, suspecting that his colleague entertained views of sole supremacy, obstructed their compliancé with the requisition of a prince to whom they were known to be attached. While the emperors were warmly disputing on this subject, the prætorians, brutally licentious, penetrated within the precincts of the palace, and carried off the acknowledged sovereigns of the state with barbarous exultation, stripping them of their robes, and treating them with derision and obloquy. In their march through the city to the camp, they heard that the Germans were advancing to attempt a rescue. The ruffians then murdered their two prisoners, and left the mangled bodies to the gaze of irreverent curiosity, or the transient look of sensibility and compassion<sup>25</sup>.

Gordian was permitted by the assassins to enjoy the undivided authority, as they could not agree in any other choice. He was only thirteen years of age, by some accounts, when he commenced the actual exercise of power ; but, according to another statement, he had entered his sixteenth year : in all probability, he was between those ages. He had a good capacity, an amiable disposition, a thirst of knowlege, and an aptitude for learning. But, being at that time deficient in manly vigor, he suffered himself to be governed by the eunuchs of the palace, and his name to be used as a sanction to the most illegal and tyrannous acts. While the state was thus misgoverned, an attempt was made by Sabinianus to wrest the imperial dignity from it's youthful possessor. An insurrection was excited in the Carthaginian province by the arts of that daring traitor ; and the governor was involved in difficulty and danger by the progress of the rebels : but he at length roused himself to vigorous

<sup>25</sup> Herod. lib. viii. cap. 8.—Zosimus says, that Maximus and Balbinus had conspired against young Gordian, and that the soldiers punished them with death for their intended injustice : but, in the affairs of this period, his exclusive authority deserves little regard.



exertion, and compelled the mal-contents to submit to his discretion and mercy. They even surrendered their leader, and thus obtained pardon for themselves<sup>26</sup>: but, whether the same indulgence was granted to him, we are not informed.

The imperial administration was reformed after the marriage of the prince, who, having Misitheus, an  
 A. D. 241. able and upright counsellor, for his father-in-law, dismissed the unprincipled eunuchs and freed-men from his court. The new minister was not only well qualified to guide the helm in time of peace, but was also capable of conducting a war with skill and vigor.

Sapor, the son of Artaxerxes, exulting in the late restoration of the Persian monarchy, had passed his frontiers with a powerful army, and, penetrating into Syria, threatened that province with total conquest. The young emperor, hastening from Europe to chastise the invaders,

A. D. 242. soon turned the tide against them. He defeated them in several conflicts, recovered all the towns which they had taken, and pursued Sapor almost to the gates of Ctesiphon. Of this success he did not claim the chief merit, but gave the highest praise, derivable from the campaign, to the counsels and suggestions of Misitheus. The loss of so valuable a friend was a source of the keenest sorrow and regret. A natural indisposition, or (which is more probable) an infusion of poison into the veins of the unfortunate minister, by the secret order of a malignant and ambitious enemy, removed him from the world;

A. D. 243. and Philip, an Arabian adventurer, the supposed author of his death, was advanced by the unsuspecting emperor to the plenitude of military command, and, in effect, to the chief political power<sup>27</sup>.

Continuing the war with the Persians, Gordian met with farther success. He defeated Sapor on the banks of the

Aboras, and would probably have improved his victory with commanding effect, if his hopes had not been baffled by the arts of Philip. The treacherous præfect stopped the convoys which ought to have arrived by the Euphrates, and led the troops into districts where their wants could not be supplied. Hence arose loud clamors, in which all respect for an amiable prince was lost. The famished and exasperated soldiers were taught to believe that all their difficulties were aggravated, if not occasioned, by the inexperience and imprudence of their youthful sovereign, who could neither direct military affairs with skill, nor manage political concerns with judgement; and the emissaries of Philip studiously urged the necessity of superseding such a prince by the election of an able warrior and statesman, who might restore vigor both to the army and the general government. The result was favorable to the intrigues of the treacherous Arab, whom the mal-contented demanded for their emperor. Some of Gordian's friends warmly opposed the unjustifiable and seditious demand: but their expostulations could not stem the torrent of mutiny. To Philip the chief authority was assigned, under the title of guardian to the nominal emperor. The injured prince, encouraged by the præfect Metius, loudly and publicly complained of this disgrace, and of the domineering arrogance of a foreign upstart, who had no pretensions to royalty: but the assembled troops refused to annul the grant by which Philip had been so highly and unreasonably favored. Gordian then made the circuit of the camp, urging the principal officers, and many of the common legionaries, to support the cause of their lawful sovereign; and, when he found that his influence was not sufficiently operative to procure even an equality of power, he requested that he might be allowed to act as prætorian præfect under the new emperor. Neither was this point conceded; nor would the jealousy of the base usurper suffer

an amiable prince to live. Philip affected an appearance of clemency and magnanimity, and pretended to leave this important question to the decision of his friends: but, reflecting on the danger of rivalry, and on the consequent insecurity of his power, he completed his injustice by giving orders for the murder of Gordian<sup>28</sup>.

The death of this prince was generally lamented, but more particularly by the senate; and he was panegyrised as one of the best men whom Rome had ever seen at her helm; as one who united learning and virtue with public spirit and disinterested patriotism. As a mark of honor to his memory, it was unanimously voted, that his posterity should enjoy the privilege of exemption from any civil or political employments which might be burthensome or disagreeable. It was subsequently observed, with the satisfaction which results from acts of retributive justice, that nine conspirators who were concerned in the murder of this lamented prince, destroyed themselves, after the death of their base employer, with the weapons which they had used against their sovereign<sup>29</sup>. This concert in the suicidal act is not very probable. Some of the emperor's enemies, filled with compunction, and wishing to avoid general odium, might so have acted; but the story, in the alleged extent, does not seem entitled to credit.

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## LETTER XVII.

*Continuation of the ROMAN History, to the Time of the Thirty Tyrants.*

WHEN the Romans could elevate an unprincipled adventurer, whose father was a leader of banditti, to the dignified stations of their emperor and their judge, we may

<sup>28</sup> Capitol. Vit. Gord. III.

<sup>29</sup> Jul. Capitol.



readily suppose, that they were a base degenerate people. It may be alleged, that it was the act of the soldiers, and that the senate, citizens, and provincials, merely acquiesced in that election which they could not prevent. But this is not a sufficient excuse. The-mutinuous troops were in a distant country: the legions dispersed over Europe were not infected with the same spirit of sedition: the senate had still a considerable degree of weight and authority; and the people could not be pleased at the intrusion of a brutal and murderous soldier into the seat of supremacy and of justice. To this disgrace, however, the subjects of the Roman world pusillanimously submitted; and the traitorous Arab was acknowledged as their lawful sovereign.

Philip gladly promoted the grant of divine honors to a prince whose rivalry he had effectually precluded. He affected to lament the death which he had occasioned, and which, with all the impudence of falsehood, he ascribed to disordered health. Marcus, a wise and experienced senator, had been chosen by his assembled brethren to succeed the murdered prince; and, when his sudden death had followed the appointment, Hostilianus was proclaimed emperor: but, as he also died soon after, the senate reluctantly acknowledged the Arabian intruder<sup>1</sup>.

The reign of this usurper was extended to the sixth year; and he seems to have endeavoured, in some degree, to atone for his criminality by the moderation of his government. When he had concluded peace with Sapor, he led his army into Syria, and took the first opportunity of testifying his favor to the Christians, without openly enrolling himself in their fraternity<sup>2</sup>. After passing an interval of tranquillity at Rome, he undertook an expedition against the Carpi, who had made incursions into

<sup>1</sup> Zonaræ Annales, lib. xii. sect. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius says, that he was the first Christian emperor: but this assertion is strongly doubted.

Mœsia. When he had chastised the invaders by two defeats, they implored peace, and obtained it<sup>3</sup>.

As the thousandth year from the foundation of the city

A. D. occurred in this reign, Philip resolved to signalise  
246. it by a splendid celebration of the secular games.

The citizens of Rome were highly gratified with the renewal of this solemnity; and, by the varied entertainments and multiplied instances of imperial bounty, were induced to forget the crimes of usurpation and murder, with which the exhibitor of the games had stained his character. But, while the seat of government remained tranquil, discontent prevailed in some of the provinces, and alarming commotions arose. Complaints of exorbitant taxation, and of the tyranny of Priscus, governor of Syria, were loudly repeated; and Papianus was invited to assume the chief authority, that he might exercise it for the relief of the provincials: but the power of this insurgent was quickly annihilated by the zeal of some adherents of Philip, by whom he was put to death as a rebel. In Pannonia, Marinus took the lead as an opponent of the emperor, who, when he informed the senate of this new insurrection, was assured by Decius, a native of that province (then supposed to be a loyal subject), that the daring traitor would soon suffer the punishment which he deserved. Marinus being murdered by some mutinous soldiers, the courtiers exhorted Philip to dismiss all fears of danger; and Decius was sent to tranquillise the province. But this officer took an opportunity of elevating himself to the supreme dignity, either being compelled by the menaces of the legionaries to supersede Philip<sup>4</sup>, or (which is far more probable) stimulated to the hazardous act by his own ambition<sup>5</sup>. The emperor, unwilling

A. D. to resign his authority without a contest, marched  
249. against his competitor, while his son and asso-

<sup>3</sup> Zosim. lib. i. sect. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Zosim.—Pompon. Laet.

<sup>5</sup> So the elder Victor insinuates, where he says, *ad imperium conspiraverat*,

ciate remained at Rome. The two armies were soon brought to a decisive action: Philip was defeated, and killed in his flight; and the son, whose immature age, gravity of character, and innocence, ought to have protected him from injury, was also put to death <sup>6</sup>.

Decius, resigning to his son a portion of the high power which he had thus acquired, exercised it with moderation in civil affairs, but with cruelty in religious concerns; for he was so hostile to the progress of Christianity, that he sacrificed many of it's professors to pagan bigotry: but this part of his conduct did not prevent the senate from complimenting him as the father of his country, or preclude the favorable testimony of some ancient historians <sup>7</sup> to the excellence of his character.

An invasion, from a new enemy, distinguished the reign of this prince. The Getæ, or Goths, crossed the Danube into Mœsia. They were a branch of the great race of the Scythians, whose movements I traced in a former letter <sup>8</sup>,—not indeed satisfactorily, but faintly and obscurely, in consequence of the incertitude of the subject. The hostile intrusion of so fierce a nation diffused consternation among the provincials from the Euxine to the Adriatic; but the imperial troops, not intimidated, harassed the invaders with considerable effect, and drove them back beyond the Danube. A renewal of invasion, accompanied with horrible ravages, drew the emperor and his son into the field; and the Goths were defeated by the vigor of the legionaries. Decius hoped to prevail so effectually over them, as to preclude the escape of any part of their army; and, with that view, he detached Trebonianus Gallus with such a force as might

<sup>6</sup> Vict. sen. de Cæsaribus.—Vict. jun.

<sup>7</sup> The younger Victor and Zosimus.—Following their report, Gibbon compares Decius, “both in life and death, with the brightest examples of ancient virtue.” The anti-Christian spirit of this writer rendered him partial to all the emperors who persecuted the rising church.

<sup>8</sup> See PART I. LETTER II.



keep them in check until the grand army arrived. But his lieutenant, who was ambitious and artful, entered into a treacherous correspondence with the enemy, and suggested the practicability of defeating the imperial troops, as soon as they should attempt to pass through a morass. The hint was readily adopted; but the barbarians did not profit by the advice before two of their divisions had been repelled with considerable loss. In the conflict with the third line, Decius, whose son had previously fallen, lost his life<sup>9</sup>.

The vacancy was quickly supplied by Gallus; but the senate named Hostilianus, second son of the deceased emperor, as joint sovereign with the aspiring officer<sup>10</sup>. This conjunction of power was not permanent; for either a pestilence; or the cruelty of Gallus, put an end to the life of Hostilianus. The surviving emperor was not disabled, by humanity of disposition, from the perpetration of such an act of atrocity; but, as the disease was very destructive, it might have reached the son of Decius.

Gallus endeavoured, by negotiatory concessions, to secure himself from Gothic hostilities. He permitted the invaders to carry off even the most distinguished captives<sup>11</sup>, and all the booty which they had seized, and even bound himself to pay an annual tribute of gold, as the price of their forbearance<sup>12</sup>.

As the army and the senate acquiesced in this ignominious treaty, it manifested the decline of Roman spirit

<sup>9</sup> Zosim. lib. i. sect. 23.—Vict. sen.—Jornandes does not impute treachery to Gallus.

<sup>10</sup> Some gold medals of this period bear the inscription of Perpenna Licinianus, who is said to have reigned eleven months. As the younger Victor applies to Hostilianus the name of Perpenna, it might be supposed that the same prince was designated, if this author did not speak also of Licinianus, and if no medals existed in the name of Hostilianus.

<sup>11</sup> These had fallen into their hands at Philippopolis, where, however, they did not encumber themselves with many prisoners, if they massacred (as Ammianus says) 100,000 individuals.

<sup>12</sup> Zosim. lib. i. sect. 24.—Zonar. lib. xii.—Pompon. Laet.

and vigor; and its effect was such as might have been expected. It stimulated the Goths and other barbarians to a frequency of irruptions and attacks; and thus the weakness which it betrayed was alarmingly aggravated.

That power which Gallus had so eagerly sought, was not long enjoyed, either by him, or by his son Volusianus, whom he had admitted to a participation of authority. The frontier provinces were again endangered by barbarian hostilities. Not only the Goths, but the Burgundians A. D. 252. and other nations of Germany, insulted the honor of Rome, and spread devastation to the southward of the Danube. Æmilian, however, to whose care Mœsia had been intrusted, defended that province with such spirit, that the invaders were driven from it, after the loss of some thousands of their number. His success gave him such importance in his own opinion, that he considered himself as worthy of the imperial dignity, and resolved to dethrone Gallus. Being supported in his ambitious views by the legionaries, who readily saluted him as their sovereign, he directed his course to Italy. The emperor and his son, advancing to meet him, were murdered at Interamna by the soldiers, whose fidelity was shaken by the report of Æmilian's liberality, and who were discouraged from acting in defence of the reigning prince, by observing the great inferiority of his troops, in point of number, to the usurper's army<sup>13</sup>.

Æmilian was an adventurer of low birth, who had emigrated from Mauritania in his youth, and gradually raised himself to a high station in the army by courage and fidelity of service. Trusting to the favor of the troops, and the submission of the senate, he did not expect to be hurled from the throne before he had enjoyed for a considerable time the advantages and delights of power: but he was soon alarmed with the appearance of a competitor.

13 Vict. sen.—Zosim.

Valerian, a citizen of a noble family, to whom Decius had granted the long-dormant office of censor, had been sent by Gallus beyond the Alps to procure military aid; and being informed, on his return to Italy, that his patron no longer existed, he advanced for the chastisement of Æmilian. The new emperor now found enemies in his own camp. It was remarked, that he was less qualified for the exercise of sovereignty than for military command; and, as Valerian's fame was then high, some of the soldiers resolved to court his favor by the murder of Æmilian. The resolution was easily carried into effect<sup>14</sup>; and the censor was promoted, with general consent, to the imperial dignity.

The reputation of Valerian declined, when he began to act as a sovereign. Like Galba, he was universally considered as fully equal to the arduous task: but, when he attempted it, he manifested his incapacity. He chose for his colleague one of the most unprincipled and worthless men in the empire,—his son Gallienus. No wise or patriotic prince would have made such an improper choice<sup>15</sup>.

So disastrous was this reign, that the empire seemed to be on the verge of ruin. The Goths renewed their incursions into Mœsia and other provinces; the Franks<sup>16</sup> rushed

14 Zosim. lib. i. sect. 28, 29.—Vict. jan.—But the elder Victor says, that his death was natural.—So obscure was the course of this imperial meteor, that he is not even mentioned by Cassiodorus in the series of Roman princes.

15 In the opinion of the superstitious, the Gods declared their sense of the inauspicious appointment, by a remarkable inundation of the Tiber in the middle of summer.

If the imperial succession had been strictly hereditary, there would have been some excuse for Valerian's nomination of his son; but, as he had accepted the sovereignty without deriving any claim from consanguineous descent, he must have considered it as an elective monarchy; and, in that point of view, Gallienus had no more pretensions than an ordinary citizen.

16 These were not a single nation, but a confederacy of many states. The Chauci, Cherusei, Catti, Tenchtheri, Frisii, Angrivarii, and other Germanic nations, entered into an union for mutual defence, and also, as it appears, for the invigoration of aggressive hostilities. Inspired with the love of freedom, they assumed the appropriate denomination of *Franks*.



from the western division of Germany into the north-eastern parts of Gaul; the Allemanni<sup>17</sup> menaced even Italy with a formidable invasion; and the Persians attacked the Asiatic dependencies of Rome. Valerian did not entirely neglect the defence of the endangered state; nor, on the other hand, did he ably or properly direct the great force which was committed to his disposal and regulation. The Franks were repelled by Aurelian, one of his best officers; yet the check was slight; and Gallienus is said to have triumphed over the same warlike confederacy; but the authority upon which the assertion rests is unsatisfactory. Still more doubtful is the statement which attributes to this prince a signal victory over 300,000 of the Allemanni<sup>18</sup>. There is less reason to dispute the accuracy of those writers<sup>19</sup> who speak of his negotiations with the enemy, from whom he purchased peace by territorial cessions. It ought not to be denied, however, that he had fits of courage, and sometimes personally opposed barbarian invaders and provincial usurpers<sup>20</sup>.

When Aurelian had distinguished himself by a repulse of the Goths, and Probus had engaged the Sarmatians with success, Valerian roused himself from his indolence, and undertook an expedition against the Persians. The ambition of Sapor had impelled him to the seizure of Armenia, after the assassination of the king of that country, whom even the Roman alliance could not protect. Encouraged by this success, he invaded Mesopotamia, and reduced some of the strongest towns in that province.

17 These, who were principally of the Suevian nation, boasted that they were *complete men*, not a feeble or dastardly race: hence arose the appellation of *Alle-manni*.

18 Upon the credit of Zonaras these stories depend. It appears that Gallienus styled himself *Germanicus maximus*; but it is probable that the exploits of one of his officers furnished him with a pretence for the assumption of the title.

19 Zosimus and the younger Victor.

20 Entrop. lib. ix. cap. 8.—Vict. sen.

Valerian met him near Edessa ; and, by his own want of military skill, or his ill-judged confidence in the abilities

A. D. and loyalty of the general whom he employed, he  
 260. lost the honor and advantage of the day, and became a prisoner to a haughty foe <sup>21</sup>.

Gallienus, instead of attempting, with anxious zeal, to procure his father's liberation, readily acquiesced in an event which removed a rival from the political scene, and gladly assumed the sole sovereignty. But his title was disputed by many pretenders, who, knowing his incapacity, aimed at the acquisition of power in the various dependencies of the empire.

The irruptions of the Goths, at this time, were particularly mischievous. Before the captivity of Valerian, they had harassed the Roman frontier to the north-east of the Euxine, and, coasting along the south-eastern side with a *flotilla* procured from the rulers of the Bosphoric nation, had stormed and pillaged the rich city of Trapezus. In a subsequent expedition, they passed along the European side of the Euxine, and, proceeding to the Byzantine strait, invaded Bithynia. They plundered six flourishing towns in that province, and destroyed two of the number by fire. A more tremendous invasion occurred while Gallienus bore the chief sway. A great armament sailed from the Tauric peninsula into the Ægean sea, and menaced the coast of Greece with a descent. The barbarians easily obtained temporary possession of Athens, and seized all the portable wealth of that illustrious city. They extended their ravages and depredations over both divisions of Greece, and also into Macedon and Thrace. Some spirited attempts were made to repel the fierce invaders; and Macrianus, in particular, gave a severe check to a strong body of marauders, while Dexippus the historian routed another party: but, as the weakness of the government

21 Trebel. Vit. Valer.—Vict. sen. et jun.—Agath.

was notorious, other descents and hostilities kept the provincials in a state of alarm ; and the attempts of usurpers increased the general confusion <sup>22</sup>.

The mention of thirty tyrants, who started up nearly at the same time in different parts, cannot fail of suggesting melancholy ideas of the miserable state of an oppressed empire. Under a dignified, just, and vigorous government, such contests for sovereign power would not have arisen. Some of these usurpers acquired their temporary authority in the reign of Valerian ; but the greater part revolted while Gallienus was the nominal emperor. It is unnecessary to particularise the acts and exploits of all these *princes*, who were not all *tyrants* in the modern acceptance of the term ; and, indeed, such a detail is precluded by the want of copious records.

At the head of the series <sup>23</sup> (but not the first in point of merit) appears Cyriades, an unprincipled voluptuary, who, with all the gold and silver which he could procure, emigrated to Persia, and, having persuaded Sapor to invade the empire, seized some of the Asiatic provinces, and assumed the title of Augustus, but lost his life by a conspiracy of his officers. In Gaul, Posthumus followed the example of usurpation, being encouraged by the high regard which the provincials testified for him. The son of Gallienus had been committed to his care and instructions ; but either the perfidious guardian murdered the youth, or some of the Gauls put him to death out of hatred to his father. After a reign of seven years, Posthumus fell a victim to the ambition of Lollianus, being assassinated with his son, whom he had admitted as an imperial colleague. Lollianus, like his predecessor, ably checked the violence of German hostility ; but, having disgusted his soldiers by subjecting them to laborious duties, he lost his life by

<sup>22</sup> Zosim.—Trebell. Vit. Gallieni.

<sup>23</sup> I have principally adopted the arrangement of Trebellius Pollio, as the commencement of each usurpation cannot be chronologically ascertained.



their resentment, which was studiously inflamed by Victorinus, (the friend and associate of Posthumus), who afterward governed with ability and reputation, until, by his adulterous lust, he entailed upon himself the sanguinary vengeance of an injured husband. His son was not suffered long to reign, being murdered by the legionaries. Marius, formerly a smith, reigned in Gaul to the third day, and then fell by the envy or discontent of a soldier who had been one of his workmen<sup>24</sup>.

In Illyria, Ingenuus assumed the purple; but, being defeated by Gallienus, he slew himself; and a great number of his partisans, both civil and military, were massacred by the incensed victor. Regillianus, a respectable officer, exercised a short sway in the same province; before he was sacrificed to a general dread of the fury of the legitimate emperor. Aureolus, having received from the Illyrian troops a grant of the sovereignty, invaded Italy; but, as he survived Gallienus, his fate will be more properly mentioned in the sequel.

The next tyrants who are enumerated are Macrianus and his son, who, at the head of 45,000 men, were vanquished and slain by Aureolus. Another son of that usurper, who was also his associate in power, was put to death by Odenatus, styled the lord of the East, whose adventures will be recorded with those of his three sons, his wife Zenobia, and his relative Meonius, all reckoned among the tyrants. After the death of Macrianus, his friend Balista, a citizen of acknowledged merit, governed for a short time, but did not escape the usual fate of the usurpers whom this calamitous period produced. Two officers of the name of Valens, to one of whom great praise is given, exposed themselves, by an assumption of power, to the swords of the capricious soldiery. Piso, whom Macrianus had sent to take away the life of one of these competitors, failed in the attempt; and,

when he had been saluted emperor in Thessaly, he was not preserved from assassination by all the excellencies of his character. In Egypt, Æmilianus acted the part of an emperor, so as to obtain the applause of the people, until he was deprived both of his power and his life by the efforts of Theodotus, a general employed by Gallienus. In other parts of Africa, Celsus conceived the hope of reigning; but his administration, which, from his regard to justice, deserved to be protracted, was closed on the seventh day by a violent death. In Cilicia, Trebellianus attained a temporary height of power, which, however, the brother of Theodotus extinguished by a vigorous conflict. Another usurper was Saturninus, whose estimable character seemed to entitle him to a longer reign than his soldiers permitted him to enjoy<sup>25</sup>.

The prince whose luxurious indolence, cruelty, and misgovernment, furnished a plausible excuse for these multiplied revolts and usurpations, at length encountered the fate which he had long deserved. While he was prosecuting the siege of Milan, which Aureolus defended against him, some of his chief officers conspired for his destruction. Roused after the close of day by the report of a sally, he rushed unarmed from his tent, and March, ordered his troops to follow him without the 268. least delay. The captain of his Dalmatian guard took advantage of the sudden alarm, and gave him a mortal wound<sup>26</sup>. The soldiers denounced vengeance against the assassin, but were soon appeased by the liberality of the conspirators, who had provided a large sum of money for the purpose of distribution. If it be true that Gallienus sometimes put to death 3000 soldiers in one day<sup>27</sup>, probably for very slight offences, it cannot be supposed that the death of such a monster could excite, among the surviving legionaries, deep or permanent regret.

25 Trebell. de Tyrannis.—Vit. Gallien.; ab eodem.

26 Zosim. lib. i. sect. 44.

27 Trebell.

## LETTER XVIII.

*The ROMAN History, continued to the Commencement of* **DIOCLETIAN'S** *Reign.*

A. D. 268. THE assailants of Gallienus had previously fixed upon a successor. Their influence was exerted in favour of Claudius, whose political and military talents were undisputed, and whose general character was estimable. It is uncertain whether he was concerned in the conspiracy. As he so highly profited by it, a suspicion of his concurrence would naturally arise in the minds of his contemporaries, in an age when treasonable ambition was outrageously frequent. His guilt, however, seems to be denied by his biographer<sup>1</sup>; and his character favors the opinion of his innocence.

Great joy filled the senate, when intelligence arrived at Rome, importing that Claudius had been chosen emperor by the army. It was exclaimed by many voices, in numerous repetitions, that the nation had always wished for such a prince; that the state urgently required such a governor. “You (said the members, apostrophising the absent Claudius) are our brother, our father, our friend, a good senator, and truly worthy of the sovereignty.” —“Defend us (they added) against Aureolus, Zenobia, and Victoria.” Without requiring the *stimulus* of exhortation, he attacked Aureolus, who had ventured out of Milan; and, by a speedy defeat, the hopes of the usurper were annihilated. Instead of listening to a proposal of negotiation, Claudius resigned him to the judgement of a military council: and, although it was known that the emperor wished to save him from death, the soldiers sacri-

<sup>1</sup> Trebellius says, *Consilio non adfuerat*; but a subsequent passage is not altogether consistent with that assertion.



ficed him to that desire of vengeance with which his persistence in revolt had inspired them<sup>2</sup>.

Before Claudius engaged in any other military enterprise, he undertook the task of reforming the army. He restored due subordination, and, without the exercise of cruelty, repressed the licentious spirit of the soldiers. He prepared them, by the enforcement of discipline, for new scenes of hostility, and, by his warmth of exhortation, inflamed them with a desire of retrieving their credit and their fame.

A formidable barbarian host threatened the empire with all the miseries of invasion. The Gothic chiefs, A. D. having provided a large fleet, embarked at the <sup>269</sup> mouth of the Tyras, and conducted a very numerous army<sup>3</sup> along the shores of the Euxine to the Thracian Bosphorus; whence, after a considerable loss not only of vessels but of men, they proceeded into the Ægean sea, and landed on the Macedonian coast. They made fruitless attempts upon Cassandria and Thessalonica, and then marched through the inland districts into Dardania, where they were encountered near Naissus by the intrepid emperor. The legionaries were in danger of being overpowered; but a strong division, sent by an unfrequented route, suddenly rushed upon the invaders, and contributed to turn the tide in favor of the imperial warriors, who (it is said) slew 50,000 of the barbarians. As the danger was not removed even by this great victory, it was necessary to risque other conflicts; and these proved highly favorable to the cause of Rome. So fortunate was every attack, that the loss of the enemy seemed sufficient to operate as an effectual check to future invasion. The Romans severely suffered on some occasions; but the issue of the campaign amply over-balanced all incidental misfortunes. Harassed with incessant attacks, and deprived

<sup>2</sup> Zosim. lib. i. sect. 44.—Trebell. Vit. Claudii.

<sup>3</sup> Elevated to the amount of 320,000 men by Trebellius and Zosimus.

of the convenience of escape by the capture, destruction, or submersion of their ships, the Goths were involved in extreme peril. An extraordinary number of captives, of both sexes, rewarded the activity and courage of the legionaries; and the remains of the invading army, seeking refuge in the vicinity of mount Hæmus, were exposed to the attacks of hunger and disease. They perished in multitudes; and the survivors were either incorporated with the Roman army, or constrained to cultivate the earth for the benefit of their conquerors<sup>4</sup>.

Claudius did not long enjoy the reputation and popularity which arose from this splendid success. He died of  
 Feb. 4, a pestilential disorder at Sirmium, as generally  
 270. and deeply lamented as were Trajan and the Antonines. His dignified complacency of manners and correctness of morals, his distinguished courage and fortitude, his patriotic zeal, and his conscientious regard for justice, rendered him an object both of affection and esteem.

Quintilius, hoping to establish himself on the basis of his brother's fame, yet not destitute of strong pretensions in his own character, declared himself emperor, with the consent of the senate and a part of the army: but, before he had reigned three weeks, he found his interest so feeble and circumscribed, that he had no prospect of withstanding the power of Aurelian, who, from the lowest rank in the army, had risen to high command. If we adopt the statement of one writer, we must impute to his soldiers the guilt of his murder<sup>5</sup>: but, by other accounts, he opened his veins in despair<sup>6</sup>.

Being invested with the sovereignty by the legions near the Danube, Aurelian soon procured, from the senate, a satisfactory acknowledgement of his authority. He then attacked a new army of Goths, who hoped to avenge the

<sup>4</sup> Trebell. Vit. Claudii.—Zosim. lib. i. sect. 45, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Trebell.

<sup>6</sup> Zosim.—Zonar.

late defeat of their countrymen. The battle long raged ; and, when it ceased on the approach of night, it could not easily be determined to which side the victory inclined. A negotiation was deemed, by both parties, preferable to a renewal of conflict ; and a treaty was adjusted, by which the Goths bound themselves to desist from all invasion of the Roman territories. They were gratified, for their promised forbearance, with the possession of Dacia ; and it was left to the option of the provincials, whether they would remain in the transferred country, or occupy the southern side of the Danube. Many of them were unwilling to change their habitations ; and their continuance in Dacia tended to the civilisation of the Gothic colonists.

As the talents of Aurelian were more adapted to war than to peaceful politics, he probably was not displeased at the hostilities of the Allemanni, who, actuated chiefly by a thirst of spoil, invaded Rætia, and were retiring after a course of depredation, when, being intercepted and in a great measure encompassed by some Roman legions, they sent deputies to the emperor to propose an alliance. He would have acceded to their request, if they had not demanded a subsidy in consideration of their eventual services : but he was so disgusted at the requisition, that he refused to agree to a treaty<sup>7</sup>.

During his absence from this scene of operations, the negligence of his officers afforded the enemy an opportunity of escape. Exulting in their release, the barbarians rushed into Italy, and harassed the provincials with furious hostilities. Aurelian, hastening to stem the torrent of invasion, was reduced to the verge of ruin by the effect of an ambuscade ; but his influence and example revived the courage of the legionaries, whose efforts at length repelled the foe<sup>8</sup>. In another

<sup>7</sup> Dexipp. apud Excerpt. Legat.

<sup>8</sup> Vit. Aureliani, a Vopisco.—The biographer attributes the success of the



conflict, the Allemanni were routed; and the citizens of Rome, who had expected to see a foreign army at their gates, were relieved from their fears. To check their future apprehensions, the senate ordered a new wall to be erected around the city; but it was not finished before the death of Aurelian.

The appearance of the victorious prince at Rome confounded those citizens who were accused of seditious practices; for the severity of his disposition gave no hopes of mercy. Some senators were put to death upon such evidence as would not have satisfied a just prince. With Aurelian, the mere adduction of a charge was, in general, sufficient even for capital condemnation: he rarely inquired into the character of the accuser, or prosecuted those investigations which would have elicited the truth.

Aurelian's next task was the rescue of Gaul from usurpation, or the subjection of that province to his own tyrannous yoke. Victoria, the mother of Victorinus, whose influence had long been exercised over the provincials, had procured the elevation of the senator Tetricus, who, in concert with her, not only governed Gaul, but extended his sway into Spain and Britain. The usurper, however, became weary of his high station, when his troops were infected with a mutinous spirit; and, after the death of his ambitious patroness, he privately intimated to Aurelian his desire of submitting to the lawful sovereign of Rome. He pretended to defend himself against the imperial legions, because he knew that his troops were not disposed to surrender to Aurelian; and, when the two armies were in action, he took an opportunity of retiring with his principal friends to the opposite camp, leaving his soldiers to be slain in heaps by the fury of their loyal antagonists.

Romans, on this occasion, to the efficacy of sacrifices and pious ceremonies; in consequence of which, the barbarians were appalled by spectres, and by portentous visions.

Thus the associated provinces were easily reduced to submission.

A female enemy remained to be subdued; and a greater warrior than Aurelianus would not have deemed himself dishonored by a contest with such a foe as Zenobia. Her husband Odenatus, a bold adventurer, had acquired princely authority at Palmyra; and the gradual extension of his sway and power enabled him to attack the Persians, over whom he repeatedly triumphed. Profiting by the disordered state of the empire, he took possession of the Asiatic provinces, and was admitted by Gallienus to a participation of the imperial dignity. He gave to his son Herod a share of power; but this prince was too luxurious and effeminate to add vigor to the government. Mæonius, from disgust or envy, murdered both the father and the son, and began to act as lord of the East; but the soldiers, instigated by Zenobia, punished him with death for his villany. The spirited widow of Odenatus instantly assumed the *insignia* of authority, and governed with firmness and wisdom. She pretended to act merely as guardian of her two sons, Herennianus and Timolaus, whom she invested with the purple, and introduced into the public councils; but, even if they had lived to the age of manhood, unmolested by the Romans, she probably would not have resigned any portion of the sovereignty. Being desirous of subjecting Egypt to her yoke, she sent 70,000 men into that country; and these invaders, being opposed by only 50,000, obtained a complete victory: but, when all the strangers had departed, except 5000 men, the Egyptians expelled this small garrison, and routed the returning Palmyrene host. Timagenes, however, who had invited the troops of Zenobia into Egypt, surprised the army of legionaries and natives, slew the general

employed by Claudius, and procured for the Asiatic princess the sovereignty of the whole province<sup>10</sup>.

Thus powerful, and seemingly intent upon the enjoyment of complete independence, Zenobia drew upon herself the arms of Aurelian. This prince, with little difficulty, put an end to her sway in Galatia, and, receiving

A. D. 272. in his progress the submission of the chief towns of Asia Minor, proceeded to Antioch. He found his antagonist encamped near that city; and a general engagement ensued. His cavalry, being comparatively light-armed, fatigued the encumbered equestrians of Palmyra by repeatedly alluring them into a pursuit, and at length, rushing vigorously upon them, slew a considerable number, while the infantry, as soon as they could bring their opponents to a close conflict, made so powerful an impression, that the victory was secured. From a hill near Daphne, the emperor afterward dislodged a strong party, and eagerly prosecuted his course toward Emesa. In the battle which ensued near that city, the imperial horse retreated, not with a view of provoking a pursuit, but from a sense of danger and dismay. The infantry, however, by the most vigorous exertions, compensated the temporary imbecility of the cavalry; and, while many parties of the recoiling horsemen were rallied, the conflict was vigorously maintained on both sides. Zenobia was at length defeated; and, unwilling to attempt the defence of Emesa, as the inhabitants were inclined to submit to the emperor, she hastened to Palmyra, with intentions of the most persevering resistance<sup>11</sup>.

Aurelian personally conducted the siege of that strong and well-garrisoned city. When he found that his early assaults were baffled, he addressed a letter to Zenobia, promising to secure the rights of the inhabitants, and to

<sup>10</sup> Zosim. lib. 1. sect. 47.

<sup>11</sup> Vopisc. Vit. Aurel.—Zosim. lib. i. sect. 54, 56.



allow her a liberal establishment, if she would surrender the town with all her treasures. Her answer was bold and haughty. Styling herself queen of the East, she replied, "No one, except yourself, ever presumed to advance such high demands. Whatever depends upon war must be gained by valor and skill. You desire me to surrender my person, as if you did not know that Cleopatra<sup>12</sup> preferred death to the idea of living, even with apparent splendor, under Roman protection." She proceeded to mention her expectations of powerful aid from Persia, Armenia, and Arabia; and, as he had found it difficult to repel the bands of robbers who had attacked him on his march to her capital, he might, she said, be wholly unable to withstand her promised reinforcements: he would then be induced to lower his imperious tone. This answer is said to have been dictated by Longinus, the celebrated philosopher and critic, who was the queen's preceptor in Grecian literature, and one of her chief political counsellors.

Continuing the siege with vigor, the emperor hoped to humble the pride of the Syrian princess. He intercepted a body of soldiers sent from Persia, and bribed or intimidated the commanders of other auxiliary detachments. When the supplies of the garrison began to fail, the queen was advised to attempt, with all possible secrecy, an escape to the Euphrates, whence she might repair to the Persian court, to solicit immediate and ample succours. Adopting this advice, she fled with few attendants to the banks of the river, and had entered a vessel, when a party of horse appeared, ready to stop her progress. She was instantly seised, and conducted to the camp of the besiegers. A part of the garrison and inhabitants still cherished views of defence, while many intimated to the Romans, by signs from the walls, a wish for par-

A. D.  
273.

<sup>12</sup> From this princess Zenobia pretended to derive her descent; but such an origin was more easily asserted than proved.

don and peace. The suggestions of the latter prevailed; and the gates were opened to the imperialists. The legionaries demanded the capital punishment of a princess who had dared to contend with their sovereign, and to usurp such an extent of power and command; but even the cruel Aurelian opposed their sanguinary wishes. He professed his admiration of the character of his illustrious captive, and declared that she should be an object of his clemency. But his innate barbarity soon resumed its base influence, prompting him to order the death of Longinus and other friends, whom she pointed out as the advisers of that conduct which had provoked the indignation of Rome<sup>13</sup>. The manly fortitude with which the philosopher received the fatal sentence, ought to have produced an instant revocation of the arbitrary mandate; but Aurelian had an uncultivated mind and an unfeeling heart.

The victor had re-entered Europe, when he received intelligence of the revolt of the Palmyrenes, who, having sacrificed to their revenge the feeble garrison of 600 men, left in the city under the command of Sandarion, gave to a relative of Zenobia the *insignia* of authority. Hastily returning to the devoted town, the enraged prince massacred not only all whom he found in arms, but even the aged citizens, the women and children, and the neighbouring peasants. He thought himself merciful, for suffering a small part of the population to live. "The few who remain," (he said) "may be supposed to be effectually reclaimed by the punishment of so many"<sup>14</sup>.

In the Asiatic provinces which had been subject to Zenobia, the Roman authority was restored, immediately after the capture of the princess and her sons; but, in Egypt, Firmus, an opulent friend of the queen, assumed the chief power. Supported by a tumultuary army of the natives, he took possession of Alexandria, and governed

13 Zosim. lib. i.

14 Vopisc. Vit. Aurel.

for some time without control. The appearance of Aurelian, however, changed the aspect of affairs. He easily defeated the usurper, and doomed him to death as a rebellious traitor<sup>15</sup>.

The recovery of the East and the West gave Aurelian an indisputable claim to the honors of a complete triumph. The solemnity was in the highest style of magnificence: it was graced by the presence of Zenobia, splendidly arrayed, encumbered with fetters and with jewels. Her sons accompanied her; and Tetricus, with his son, also appeared in the procession. The Gallic usurper was treated in the sequel with high respect. He was restored to his senatorial dignity and his estates, and gratified with an honorable and lucrative employment. Zenobia and her sons were likewise received into favor, and enabled to subsist in affluence<sup>16</sup>.

The vanquished princess possessed great courage and a masculine spirit. Her understanding and talents were very respectable: she had a taste for literature, and an enlightened mind; and was well qualified for the task of government. She kept a splendid court upon the eastern model, and endeavoured to impress her people with awe, by exacting from those who approached her person, all the humility of reverence. If the Romans had not been her adversaries, she might have reigned long with dignity, reputation, and security.

During an interval of peace, Aurelian enacted a variety of regulations, some of which were re-  
A. D. 274.  
 formative and salutary. He more effectually repressed adultery and every species of incontinence; ordered the punishment of all informers who could not substantiate the charges which they adduced; and subjected every member of his household to the utmost rigor of those laws which had frequently been violated with impunity by for-

<sup>15</sup> Vit. Firmi, a Vopisco.

<sup>16</sup> Trebell. Vit. Tetrici et Zenobiæ.—Vopisc. Vit. Aurel.



mer courtiers and imperial domestics. He discountenanced profaneness and impiety ; and, by an augmentation of power and revenue, provided for the respectability of the ministers of religion. He rendered himself popular by a remission of the sums due from individuals to the treasury, and by a considerable addition to the articles usually distributed among the plebeian inhabitants of Rome. The coin having been debased, he restored it to it's legitimate purity. The officers and workmen of the mint had recently excited commotions, in the hope of avoiding punishment for their deterioration of the currency ; but they would not have been able to produce an insurrection, if the emperor's cruelty had not rendered him odious to the higher orders. The rebellion was crushed by his vigor, yet not without the slaughter of 7000 of the legionaries. For the treason which occasioned this loss, he took the most severe revenge<sup>17</sup>.

Weary of a state of peace, he meditated a new war. He hoped to convince the Persians of the superiority of the Roman arms, and to chastise them for their arrogant treatment of Valerian. With this view, he conducted a well-disciplined army into Thrace ; but, when he was on the point of leaving Europe, he fell a victim to the severity of his disposition. One of his secretaries, being guilty of rapacious practices, had been menaced with

Jan. 29, punishment ; and, to avert the dreaded evil, he  
<sup>275.</sup> seduced some officers of the guard into a conspiracy.

He forged, in the emperor's name, a letter which marked out these men for death, among other intended victims ; and, as they did not doubt the authenticity of the communication, they took the first opportunity of crushing the tyrant. Not entertaining the least suspicion of his danger, he was murdered by those who had sworn to defend him<sup>18</sup>.

17 Aurel. Vict. de Cæsaribus, cap. 35.—Vopisc.

18 Zosim. lib. i. sect. 68.—Vopisc.—Entrop.

In an age of degeneracy and licentiousness, a long *inter-regnum* might have been expected to produce a confusion bordering upon anarchy : but such was the moderation which prevailed in the army, and with such concord did the different classes of the community unite for the preservation of public tranquillity, that the want of an emperor did not seem to be felt. The troops regretted the loss of a prince who had led them to victory, and restored their fame ; and, in an address to the senate, they declared their unwillingness to supply his place with any one of the *few* who had been concerned in his death, or of the *great number* whose negligence had suffered him to fall by the hands of traitors. When this address was taken into consideration, Tacitus, who derived his origin from the celebrated historian, harangued the assembly in praise of Aurelian, who (he said) had saved Italy, chastised the barbarian hordes, recovered the revolted provinces, decorated the temples<sup>19</sup> with rich spoils, and imparted new energy to the government ; and, as this prince had been chosen by the legionaries, he proposed that they should also nominate a successor. The suggestion was adopted by the whole senate ; but the soldiers, repeating their refusal of all concern in the election, respectfully insisted upon the appointment of a new sovereign by the conscript fathers. Each party continued, for above seven months<sup>20</sup>, to decline the privilege of nomination. The consul Gordian then stated the necessity of putting an end to the *inter-regnum*, as the troops required an imperial leader, and as the barbarians seemed to threaten an invasion of the provinces. Tacitus was preparing to de-

19 Particularly one which he erected to the sun, in whose worship his mother had officiated, and who was the favorite object of his reverential regard.

20 This interval is called, by Gibbon, "an amazing period of tranquil *anarchy*." But a term which designates the absence of all regular government cannot properly be applied to the *inter-regnum* in question ; for the laws then had their free course, and the senate and magistrates exercised undisputed authority.

liver his opinion, when his voice was overpowered by loud acclamations. "We fix upon you for our emperor," said many of the members; and an unanimous vote of the assembly ratified a choice which appeared to be judicious. He pleaded his age as a disqualification; but no excuse was admitted. The prætorians, and the citizens in general, confirmed the election; to which the legions in the provinces also assented.

The attachment of the new emperor to the ancient constitution prompted him to restore to the senate, in a great degree, that power which his predecessors had usurped: but the jealousy of the army soon returned; and the triumph of the aristocracy was transient and delusive. Military licentiousness disdained implicit submission to a just and moderate prince, who did not, like Aurelian, govern by terror; and the late acquiescence in the will of the senate was censured as an instance of weakness, rather than applauded as the result of patriotic feelings.

When he had conducted the internal administration in a manner which no class of his subjects could justly disapprove, Tacitus repaired to the camp which had been formed in Thrace, and led his army against the Alani, who had ventured to ravage some of the provinces of Asia Minor. He was so far successful, as to enforce their return, after the loss of many of their number, to the country between the Borysthenes and the Tanais. The fatigues of the campaign impaired his health; but his constitution would have defied more serious inconveniences than he in that respect sustained, if his mind had not been agitated by the disaffection, arrogance, and disorderly proceedings of the soldiers. His dissolution was April 12, accelerated by his uneasy reflexions<sup>21</sup>. That  
276 power which he had been constrained by impotency to accept, and which he had so laudably exercised,



would otherwise have been wrested from him by military violence. His brother Florianus thought himself entitled to the succession, as if the throne had belonged to his family, because the late prince had filled it for a few months; but he ought to have imitated the moderation of Tacitus, who would not have presumed to reign without a previous appointment from the senate. The legions of Europe and of Asia Minor apparently supported his pretensions; but those of Syria and of Egypt offered their allegiance to Probus, a native of Pannonia, who, having highly distinguished himself by his military talents, had been invested by Tacitus with the chief command in those provinces. He expressed his reluctance, but did not refuse the honor. His fame soon operated to the ruin of his competitor, who was deserted by his troops, and murdered in the third month of his reign<sup>22</sup>.

When the senate had sanctioned those military suffrages which had elevated Probus to the sovereignty, he graciously left to that assembly the task of civil government, while he officiated as the director of military concerns. Entering Gaul with a numerous army, he vigorously opposed the barbarian invaders of that country, who had severely harassed the provincials, and had recently subdued an extensive portion of territory. His success justified the hopes which his friends and the public conceived of him. He obtained repeated victories, and recovered sixty considerable towns which the enemy had seized<sup>23</sup>. Among the invaders the Logiones are mentioned. They inhabited the country between the Oder and the Vistula, and were more barbarous than the generality of the German nations: but their ferocity did not intimidate the legionaries, who gave them a total defeat. Those who survived the battle were treated with lenity, and indulged with an unmolested retreat<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Vopisc. Vit. Floriani et Probi.

<sup>23</sup> Vopisc. Vit. Probi. <sup>24</sup> Zösim. lib. i. sect. 75.

After this fortunate campaign, the emperor colonised various districts of Germany, and erected a rampart from the Danube to the Rhine, for the defence of the provincial territories. At the same time, he endeavoured to render the barbarians themselves instrumental to the security of his people. He procured, from the vanquished chieftains, a supply of youthful warriors, to the amount of 16,000 men, whom he distributed in small companies, chiefly among the troops of the frontiers, so as to render them useful, without giving them an opportunity of becoming dangerous. He also encouraged multitudes of Germans to form peaceable settlements in the imperial dominions, and furnished them with the means of agricultural employment. Some of these communities were submissive to their new sovereign; while others disturbed the tranquillity of their fellow-subjects, and rushed into revolt with mischievous effect, but rarely with that success which allowed them to escape<sup>25</sup>.

A. D. 278. From the German frontiers, Probus directed his march into Rhætia; and, leaving that country in peace, proceeded to Illyria, into which the Sarmatians had penetrated. He soon chastised those intruders, and enforced a dereliction of the plunder which they had collected. When he advanced into Thrace, the Goths, apprehending such an attack as they were not prepared to sustain, sent deputies to assure him of their submission, or promise their friendship. Transferring his attention to the Asiatic dependencies of Rome, he over-awed the people in his progress to Cilicia, where he was detained by the necessity of repressing the turbulence and enforcing the dependence of the Isaurian banditti, whose licentious spirit had long harassed the quiet inhabitants of the

<sup>25</sup> A colonial body of Franks, stationed near the coast of the Euxine, had a remarkable escape. They seized a *flotilla*, passed into the *Ægean* sea, made predatory descents in Greece and Sicily, proceeded into the Atlantic ocean, sailed up the British channel, and reached the Batavian territories. *Zosimus*.

provinces, and defied the authority of the government. Their mountainous retreats did not secure them. From some of these stations they were dislodged by fierce assaults, while other posts were surrendered without a siege.

Egypt also required the emperor's presence. The disorders of the upper province more particularly called for a speedy remedy, which the judgement and vigor of Probus enabled him to apply. He marched against the Blemyes, a savage race, whose intrusion into the Thebais had drawn off several cities from the imperial authority. He defeated the barbarians with great slaughter, and re-established the Roman power in that province<sup>26</sup>.

The fame of his exploits reached the Persian court; and, on his return to Asia, he received a deputation, offering the friendship of Varanes<sup>27</sup>. He treated the envoys with contempt rather than with complacency, and dismissed them without the desired promise of forbearance. His high military character, however, which made so great an impression upon a foreign prince, did not intimidate all his subjects into an acquiescence in his sway. Saturninus<sup>28</sup>, an officer who had displayed both courage and policy in various scenes of public life, was stimulated, by the urgent persuasions of his friends and the soldiery, to assume the imperial dignity. The provincials of Egypt and Syria promised to support his usurpation: but he did not acquire, even by the extension of revolt, sufficient power to withstand the efforts of Probus. He received from that prince an offer of pardon; but his soldiers so closely

<sup>26</sup> Vopisc. Vit. Probi.

<sup>27</sup> Called *Bahram* by the Oriental writers. It is doubtful whether this prince was the first or the second of the name, as the chronology of this period is not settled with indisputable accuracy: but it was more probably the latter, whose reign, commencing in the time of Probus, was prolonged to seventeen years.

<sup>28</sup> Vopiscus cautions his readers against confounding this rebel with one of the thirty tyrants, who bore the same name. Both were men of great merit; but he who revolted from Gallienus had a plausible excuse for his conduct, which the government of Probus did not readily supply.



watched him, that he had no opportunity of accepting it. Having retired to a fortified post, he was besieged by an imperial detachment; and, as soon as he became a prisoner, he was put to death by the incensed legionaries.

Another opponent of Probus was Proculus, formerly a leader of banditti, and afterward a military tribune, who assumed the purple in Gaul, and routed an army of Ger-

A. D. 279. man invaders; but he was pursued by the emperor into the territories of the Franks, vanquished, and slain. Bonosus, a Spaniard by birth, but of British extraction,—distinguished as a soldier, and remarkable also for drinking more than any other man, under the appearance of perfect sobriety,—was likewise a rebellious candidate for the supreme power; and he exercised it for some time in Spain, Gaul, and Britain. Probus, as unwilling to admit this competitor to a participation of authority as either of the former, attacked him with that decisive vigor which impelled him to suicide<sup>29</sup>.

Having baffled all the attempts of the insurgents, while he over-awed foreign powers, the emperor seemed to have a fair prospect of enjoying many years of peace; and he even ventured publicly to express a hope, that an army would soon cease to form a part of the establishment. This hint made a deep impression. The legionaries began to apprehend, that they should lose their consequence and dignity, and be driven back amidst the herd of neglected plebeians. Another remark also gave great disgust. “Soldiers (said Probus) ought not to eat the bread of idleness;” and he therefore constantly employed them in public works of various descriptions. The rigors of laborious service, in time of peace, became so irksome

29 Vopisc. Vit. Proculi et Bonosi.—Another ambitious adventurer is mentioned by Zosimus, who represents him as governor of South Britain, and says, that Victorinus, the adviser of his promotion to that dignity, undertook the task of crushing him, and did not promise more than he performed.

and intolerable, that a mutiny arose in the camp August, at Sirmium. Probus retired to a watch-tower 281. for safety: but the mal-contents would not suffer their severe task-master to escape<sup>30</sup>.

The senate and people sincerely lamented the fate of Probus, who, though too strict and rigid in his government, and sometimes cruel, was yet entitled to general esteem for his manly virtues, his integrity<sup>31</sup>, and his patriotism. Their regret was insufficiently allayed by the legionary choice of a successor; not that they particularly disapproved the character or doubted the competency of Carus, the new emperor, but because they dreaded the influence and future pretensions of his son Carinus.

Carus was in the decline of life; but age had not impaired his martial zeal. He resolved to undertake an expedition against the Persians, who, from the intelligence which he had received of the factious state of their court, were not likely to oppose him with effect. Committing the administration of the West to Carinus, he took Numerian, his second son, to the East, to initiate him in the practice of war. In his way to the shores of the Propontis, he encountered an army of Sarmatians, and increased his military fame by a signal victory. His Asiatic campaign was equally honorable to the Roman arms. A. D. He recovered Mesopotamia, routed the troops of 282. Varanes, and reached Ctesiphon in triumphant progress; but, while he was encamped beyond the Tigris (which, according to the alleged admonition of an oracle, the Romans were not to pass in the career of victory), he either died of indisposition, or was stricken dead by lightening<sup>32</sup>.

30 Vopisc. Vit. Probi.—Aurel. Vict. de Caesaribus, cap. 37.

31 The soldiers, alluding to his *probitas*, made a pun upon his name, in the monumental inscription with which they honored him; acknowledging that he was truly *probus*.

32 His secretary, in a letter written soon after the emperor's death, gave an opinion to the former effect; but Eutropius, Aurelius Victor, Eusebius, and other writers, support the latter statement.

The superstition of the soldiers would not suffer them to prosecute the course which Carus had commenced. They desired Numerian to re-conduct them within the Roman frontier, and not offend the Gods by rash perseverance. He and his brother were now declared emperors. He was an amiable and promising prince, a cultivator of learning, an advocate of virtue and of just government; while Carinus was a depraved voluptuary and an inhuman oppressor.

The elder brother, notwithstanding his tyrannical administration, rendered himself in some degree popular by the magnificence of those games and diversions with which he gratified the citizens of Rome, and which were long remembered with pride and joy. A splendid triumph was also intended to follow the return of Numerian from the East: but that prince had scarcely crossed the Propontis, when he was murdered by the traitorous ambition of one of his principal officers. The sanguinary act is generally imputed to the præfect Aper, whose daughter the young prince had espoused: but, in all probability, it was not perpetrated without the knowledge and consent of Diocletian, a low-born Dalmatian, who had risen to the command of the emperor's domestic guard. This adventurer affected to promote an inquiry into the death of Numerian; and, having in the mean time procured the honor of imperial election, at which he had long aimed, Sept. 17, he called Aper into his presence, and coolly <sup>283.</sup> stabbed him, as if his guilt had been demonstrated beyond all possibility of doubt<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Vopisc. Vit. Numeriani.—Aurel. Vict. de Cæsaribus, cap. 39.—Eutrop. ix. 18.



## LETTER XIX.

*History of the Roman Empire, to the Success of Constantine over Maxentius.*

AS soon as Diocletian was declared emperor by the army, he resolved to treat Carinus as an usurper, and to expel him from the throne which he disgraced; and the son of Carus was equally disposed to treat the Dalmatian as a traitor and a rebel. At the first view, the contest appeared doubtful. One had the resources of the East; the other had the command of the West. In both divisions, the people would have preferred Diocletian; but they remained passive on the occasion. The senate outwardly supported Carinus; while the majority of the members, detesting his wanton tyranny, secretly favored the pretensions of his competitor.

Of the war which ensued, no accurate detail can be given. It is affirmed, that many conflicts occurred; but the distinguishing features are not exhibited. Near Margus, in Upper Mœsia, the contest was decided. Carinus, having defeated and slain Sabinus, who had erected near Verona the standard of revolt, advanced with confidence to meet Diocletian, and would have secured the victory, if his vices, and more particularly his adulterous propensities, had not armed some of his own officers against him. By their indignation he was deprived of his life, when his troops were vigorously striving to complete the advantage which they had already obtained in the collision<sup>1</sup>. When they were apprised of his death, they instantly submitted to Diocletian, who, a few moments before, appeared to stand on the verge of ruin.

1 Vict. de Cæsaribus, cap. 39.—Vopiscus, without alluding to any act of treachery or vengeance, says, that Carinus lost both the victory and his life—*pictus occubuit*.

The new emperor displayed, after this success, a degree of moderation very unusual in the conduct of a Roman commander. He had no right, indeed, to punish those who had supported an acknowledged sovereign: but conquerors, in a civil war, are rarely disposed to listen to the dictates of reason or of equity. Their usual process is the infliction of sanguinary revenge. Satisfied with the acquisition of the sovereignty, Diocletian abstained, in the first year of his reign, from murder and confiscation, and suffered many of the friends of Carinus to retain their employments; an instance of forbearance which many construed into the most dignified magnanimity.

The enormous extent of the empire, and the danger to which it was exposed from the occasional discontent of the people, the ambition of pretenders, and the arms of foreign enemies, rendered the task of government burdensome and arduous. Diocletian soon became fully sensible of the difficulties of that exalted station into which he had voluntarily entered; and, while he took a comprehensive survey of the multiplied dependencies of Rome, he felt the expediency, if not the absolute necessity, of selecting an imperial associate. He made choice of a rough soldier<sup>2</sup>, whose intrepidity defied danger, and who, under judicious direction, seemed capable of great enterprises, and calculated for every service in which vigor was requisite. Maximian, called Herculus from his devotion to the demi-god Hercules, and his emulation of the useful courage of that hero, was the friend whom the emperor invited to a participation of power and dignity. He

A. D. 285. readily accepted the offer; and one who was originally a mere peasant, was honored with the title of Augustus, and invested with a height of power, which was limited only by his grateful subserviency to his politic benefactor.

2 Aurelius Victor properly calls him *semi-agrestem*.

An insurrection in Gaul immediately demanded the exertions of Maximian. The peasants in that country had long groaned under the miseries of servitude, being oppressed by the higher class of their countrymen, and not very kindly treated by the officers of the government. Roused to arms by the inattention of the provincial administrators to their complaints, they committed furious devastations, and attempted, but without adequate means of success, the reduction of towns. When they had for some time filled the country with confusion, Maximian advanced against them with a well-disciplined force, defeated them in several conflicts, and re-established subordination and tranquillity<sup>3</sup>. From the known character of their conqueror, it may easily be supposed that many of the insurgents suffered all the rigors of punishment; and it does not appear that the humanity or the policy of Diocletian rescued the survivors from their depression.

The intrusion of the Germans into various parts of Gaul furnished Maximian with another opportunity of displaying his military talents. He routed detached parties of those turbulent barbarians, slew a considerable number, and dispersed the prisoners about the country, to be employed in agriculture and in other services. A. D. 286.

His attention, soon after this victory, was called to the island of Britain, which, by the influence of Carausius, was in a state of revolt. This officer was a Belgian, who, being intrusted with the command of a fleet for the repression of piracy, seized many vessels of the Saxon depredators in the British channel; but, instead of restoring the spoils to the plundered individuals, or sending the produce to the officers of finance, he kept possession of the greater part for his own emolument. This shameful breach of trust could not long remain unknown to both

<sup>3</sup> Viet. de Cæs. cap. 39.—Eutrop.



the emperors. As soon as Maximian was informed of it, he commanded the seizure of the bold delinquent Carausius, evading a mandate which confounded his hopes and threatened his life, courted and bribed the seamen to support him in a revolt; and, drawing into his views the legionaries and the provincials of Britain, he assumed the authority of an independent prince<sup>4</sup>.

Such an audacious act of usurpation gave high offence to the imperial court. The ease with which it was effected was apparently a severe reflexion upon a government which seemed unable to protect itself. But, while Diocletian lamented the loss of a valuable province, he did not act with vigor for its recovery. Maximian, indeed, made great naval preparations for crushing the usurper; but his men were so inferior in maritime skill, that he could not prevail over the armament of Carausius; and his ill success in these engagements deterred him from attempting an invasion of the island. Upon farther deliberation, it was resolved, that the master of South-Britain, whose naval power was so considerable, and whose ambition and courage menaced Gaul with danger, should be conciliated, and invited into an alliance. A treaty was therefore

A. D. 287, adjusted, permitting Carausius to retain the sovereignty which he had seized<sup>5</sup>. His authority being thus sanctioned, he governed with more decisive sway, and did not suffer either of the continental emperors to dictate to him in any point of policy, or, in the smallest degree, to control his operations.

In the mean time, Diocletian, though not (like some of his predecessors) fond of war, ventured to act personally in various expeditions. Over the Sarmatians he obtained

A. D. 288, some advantages; and the Goths of Dacia felt, in his presence, the vigor of the imperial arms. He, at the same time, artfully fomented discord among

<sup>4</sup> Eumen. Panegyri.—Vict. cap. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Eutrop. lib. ix. cap. 22.

the barbarian nations, and gladly witnessed that jealous and resentful spirit, which, by involving the fierce communities in sanguinary dissensions, gave the subjects of Rome a respite from attack. Another part of his system was the multiplication of forts upon the frontiers, by which sudden irruptions were repressed.

Notwithstanding these efforts of war and policy, the dignity of the empire was still insulted, and its safety was still precarious. To meet the public danger with more vigorous effect, and more firmly to prop the declining state, Diocletian and his colleague transferred a great share of <sup>A. D.</sup> the burthen of government to Galerius and Constantius<sup>6</sup>, who, with a view to the imperial succession, were denominated Cæsars, and who, even in the period of probation and expectancy, were allowed to exercise a plenitude of imperial power. The former was of low birth, having been formerly a herdsman: the latter was paternally of a noble origin, and was related, by his mother, to the second Claudius. Both were brave and skilful commanders; but the general merit of Constantius, both as a prince and as a man, was superior to that of his associate. So highly was he esteemed by Carus, that this prince had formed the intention of superseding his profligate son Carinus by the appointment of his respectable friend to the imperial succession<sup>7</sup>. For the purpose of cementing the new association, Diocletian gave his daughter in marriage to Galerius, who was previously required by his patron to divorce his former wife; while Maximian, exacting a similar renunciation, presented his step-daughter to Constantius. The four princes lived thenceforward in friendly union, and acted in harmonious concert.

Constantius undertook the recovery of provincial Britain. Having taken Boulogne (which had for some years belonged to Carausius), and subdued the Belgic allies of

6 Viet. cap. 39.—Eusebii Chron.

7 Vopisc. Vit. Carini.

the usurper, he prepared such a navy as, he thought, would overwhelm the opposing fleet. Carausius did not live to repel the danger which threatened him, being treacherously murdered by one of his officers,

A. D. named Alectus, who, without opposition from the  
292. army or the people, assumed the British sovereignty, which he enjoyed for some years<sup>8</sup>. At length, a part of the Roman armament, eluding the vigilance of the enemy, approached the island; and a considerable force, landing on the southern coast, found an opportunity of defeating Alectus, who lost his life in the conflict. Constantius arrived soon afterward, and received

A. D. the submission of the troops and the provincials.  
295. This re-conquest gave great joy at Rome, as the importance of the island was generally acknowledged.

Maximian devoted his chief attention to Italy and to the African provinces. Aurelius Julianus had assumed the imperial dignity in the former country, and Epidius Achilleus in Egypt. Not meeting with success in Europe, Aurelius erected his standard in Africa; but, being defeated, he put an end to his own life. Some of the Mauritanian tribes were afterward fully subdued by Maximian; but the Egyptian revolted were not reclaimed without the personal efforts of Diocletian, who was obliged to waste above seven months in the siege of Alexandria. Deprived of supplies of water, and hopeless of relief, the citizens at length submitted. Their leader was

A. D. capitally punished for his usurpation; his chief  
296. partisans in the city also suffered death: many were deprived of their property, and banished; and, in other parts of Egypt, the vengeance of the government was exercised in the most terrific form<sup>9</sup>. To restrain the incursions of the Blemyes into Upper-Egypt, the emperor invited some of the Nubian tribes to settle in the



province: he even pensioned the new colonists and the former nation, in the vain hope of establishing tranquillity in that part of the dominions of Rome.

A war with Narses, the Persian king, called forth all the exertions of Galerius. Encouraged by the number and the spirit of the enemies of Rome, that monarch invaded Armenia, and, with little difficulty, dethroned Tiridates, who had long governed the country under the protection of Diocletian. The emperor resolved to restore the expelled prince to his throne; not indeed by his personal efforts, but by the vigor of his son-in-law. In two conflicts, the advantage which either party obtained was not very considerable; but it seemed rather to lean to the side of Galerius. The next engagement was unfortunate (if not disgraceful) to the Romans, whose force, comparatively small, narrowly escaped ruin, being nearly surrounded in a spacious plain<sup>10</sup> by the Persian cavalry, and defeated with great loss. Imputing this disaster to the negligence of the general, Diocletian exposed him, after his return to the Syrian capital, to the ridicule and contempt of the populace, by obliging him to run in his purple array at the side of the imperial chariot, for the space of a mile, without condescending to honor him with the smallest token of regard<sup>11</sup>.

With a new army, principally levied in Illyria and Mœsia, and reinforced by a stipendiary body of Goths, Galerius, who, by a confident promise of victory, had restored himself to the favor of his patron, advanced into Armenia, where Narses and his troops were en-  
A. D.  
297.  
 camped. Having privately reconnoitred the position of the foe, he directed his attack so opportunely and so vigorously, that the Persians were soon thrown into confusion. Their sovereign with difficulty escaped from the great slaughter that ensued. Many of his nobles, the

<sup>10</sup> Between Callinicum and Carrhæ. *Eutrop.*

<sup>11</sup> Ammian. lib. xiv. sect. 36.—Rufi Breviar.

ladies of his court, and some of his children, became prisoners; and an abundance of valuable spoils rewarded the victors<sup>12</sup>.

Galerius, sanguinely concluding, that the Persian monarchy might be subverted by an immediate advance into the heart of the country, would have exerted every effort for the completion of his success, if his eagerness had not been restrained by the prudence of Diocletian: The circumspect emperor was aware of the difficulty of reducing a powerful kingdom into a provincial state; and, even if it had been practicable, he considered the Roman dominions as already too extensive to be governed with facility.

Humbled by a signal defeat, Narses sued for peace. One of his ministers met Diocletian and Galerius at Nisibis, and requested that such terms might be granted as would not inflict upon the vanquished the keen feelings of disgrace. A haughty but not unfavorable answer was given to the envoy; and a Roman ambassador, being sent to the court of Narses, adjusted the conditions of peace. It was agreed, that the Persians should relinquish Mesopotamia, and also cede to the Romans five provinces or districts beyond the Tigris; that Armenia should be restored to Tiridates, and be enlarged on the side of Media; and that the kings of Iberia should be the vassals of Rome<sup>13</sup>.

To prevent such a renewal of the war as might endanger his throne, Narses submitted to the dictates of Diocletian and Galerius; but the dishonorable nature of the terms made a deep impression upon his mind. It is even said, that his ill success and disgrace broke his heart<sup>14</sup>. This assertion is not so improbable as to be wholly reject-

<sup>12</sup> Eutrop. lib. ix. cap. 25.—Vict. de Cas.—Euseb. Chron.

<sup>13</sup> Pet. Patr. in Excerpt. Legat.—Rufi Brev.

<sup>14</sup> Bibliothèque Orientale, par M. d'Herbelot.

ed; but he seems to have lived some years after he had given his assent to the treaty.

Other acts of warfare occurred in this reign; but, notwithstanding the importance of the period, we have a very imperfect knowledge of its events and transactions, whether civil, political, or military. Diocletian continued to be the primary orb of the system, while Maximian and the two Cæsars were his *satellites*. He dictated his will both in war and peace; and the empire felt his influence in its remotest corners. The supreme power seemed to be in the hands of four princes; but it was in effect exercised by one. If the fierce Maximian and the haughty Galerius submitted to their imperial friend, still less could it be supposed that the prudent and moderate Constantius would be refractory. This prince proved as useful in curbing the barbarians of Europe, as were the two former generals in defending northern Africa and the Asiatic provinces. He distinguished himself against the Allemanni, who, having invaded Gaul, were repelled and severely chastised; and, in other actions, he maintained the honor and provided for the security of Rome.

When peace seemed to be fully restored, a splendid triumph announced the success of the Romans. Diocletian ordered that it should be accompanied with games and festivities, intended to celebrate his entrance into the twentieth year of his administration. Although the Roman metropolis was the scene of these solemnities, the emperor, pretending that it was too distant from the occasional seats of war, had long ceased to make it his place of residence; and his neglect of so revered a spot did not tend to the increase of his popularity. By this disrespect to the great city, and by other operations of policy, he hoped to annihilate the regard which a great part of the community still entertained for the senate, and to render that assembly powerless and insignificant. For the promotion of that illiberal and unconstitutional object,



he employed the stern tyranny of Maximian, who, without any advice or instructions from his patron, would readily have undertaken the ungracious task. This prince, when he was not engaged in war, chiefly resided at Milan, whence he issued orders for the banishment, and sometimes for the death, of such senators as seemed to disapprove the existing plan of government, or to wish for the restoration of republican sway. Diocletian, who affected moderation and clemency, endeavoured to avoid the odium of these iniquitous acts, by denying that he had any concern in them: yet he seemed to excuse them, by hinting, that his associate might be supposed to have good reasons for his conduct, or just grounds of suspicion. He exercised his own authority, at the same time, in diminishing the number of the prætorians and other armed inhabitants of Rome, who were apparently more inclined to support the senate, than to abet the tyranny of the Dalmatian upstart and his ferocious colleague.

Having fully established his power, and provided for the security of the empire, Diocletian surprised the world by his resignation. The fatigues of that military life which he had led before his acquisition of the sovereignty, and that anxious attention which he subsequently paid to the concerns of government, had so impaired his constitution, that he wished for private indulgence and repose, particularly after a long indisposition, which had seriously enfeebled his frame. It has been affirmed, not without probability, that he dreaded the increasing difficulties of government, and prognosticated alarming commotions, from which he eagerly wished to withdraw himself<sup>15</sup>. That he was menaced by his son-in-law with opposition and hostility, if he would not resign his station, has also been asserted<sup>16</sup>, but seemingly without sufficient authority. At Nicomedia, which had long been his favorite

<sup>15</sup> Vict. de Cæs. cap. 39.

<sup>16</sup> By Lactantius.

abode, he announced his intention of retiring May 1,  
304. from power; and, at the same moment, Maximian, in a public assembly at Milan, surrendered the imperial *insignia*<sup>17</sup>: exhibiting, amidst a love of power, a striking instance of self-denial, and of implicit submission to the advice of a friend, who, having long before granted him, with the national assent, a full equality of power, had no right to revoke or supersede the grant from the mere suggestions of caprice.

Without a brilliant genius, or a mind that was highly cultivated, Diocletian possessed considerable talents, and understood the art of governing a nation. He was active, diligent, persevering, resolute, cool, and artful: he could influence by persuasion, or over-awe by a display of vigor, and could practise policy, or use violence, with alternate and equal address. With a view of attracting reverence, he secluded himself from the vulgar gaze, entrenched himself within the lines of multiplied forms, exacted from persons of the highest rank the humility of prostration, wore a diadem enriched with pearls, and, in the establishment of his court and household, emulated the magnificence of an oriental monarch. His plan of government, by four princes, seemed for a time to give strength to the empire: but the splendid courts and expensive establishments with which it was attended, impoverished the plundered people; and it soon led to a division which hastened the decline of the western empire. This prince was cruel from inclination, and merciful only from policy: his suspicious caution excluded the sincerity of friendship; selfishness contracted his heart, and the man was lost in the politician<sup>18</sup>.

The two Cæsars immediately declared themselves em-

17 Eutrop. lib. ix. cap. 27.—Eusebii Chron.

18 He was not so meanly avaricious as our Henry the Seventh; but, in the chief points of his character, that monarch, who was the creature of policy, resembled Diocletian.

perors; but it was not supposed that they would long act in amicable concert, as their dispositions were very dissimilar. The moderation of Constantius formed a contrast to the haughty violence of Galerius. The former prince had no wish to oppress or tyrannise: the latter was fond of lordly sway; and, although he had submitted to the imposing authority of Diocletian, whom he regarded as his benefactor, he was not inclined to pay the same respect to Constantius, to whom he was under no obligations. Without the concurrence of this prince, he selected, as heirs of the empire, his nephew Maximin and his friend Severus; and, if Constantius had not voluntarily contented himself with a small portion of the Roman territories, Galerius would probably have compelled him, by arms, to relinquish all concern in the administration of the rest.

Spain, Gaul, and Britain, were reserved by the emperor Constantius for his own government; and, in each of those provinces, he rendered himself highly popular by his attention to the welfare and happiness of every class of the community. He was in Gaul when the extraordinary resignation was announced; but his eldest son Constantine was at that time in the power of Galerius, whose jealousy of the talents and spirit which the young warrior had displayed, roused the apprehensions of the anxious father. The endangered prince, however, found the means of escape; and, having traversed the continent with uncommon rapidity, he accompanied Constantius to our island.

After a successful campaign against the North-Britons, the emperor died at York; and the troops immediately

July 25,  
305. nominated his son for his successor. He affected an unwillingness to accept the honor; but his am-

bition prompted him to acquiesce in the election; and his love of life also influenced him on this occasion; for he knew that his only chance of safety was in the assumption of



power. Galerius was inflamed with rage when he heard of the irregular appointment; but, being aware of the difficulty of annulling it, he condescended to honor Constantine with the appellation of Cæsar, and to gratify him with the administration of the provinces in question<sup>19</sup>.

Another rival of Galerius soon found an opportunity of rising into power. Maximian had a son named Maxentius, who, taking advantage of the discontent which prevailed at Rome, offered himself to the senate and the prætorians, as a leader who would rescue them from oppression. Having drawn around him a multitude of partisans, this new claimant began to exercise the functions of sovereignty; and his success encouraged his father to emerge from his retreat, and resume the authority which he had relinquished. Diocletian was urged by his former associate to follow the ambitious example; but he prudently rejected the temptation, and declined the risk, declaring that he derived greater pleasure from the cultivation of his fields and gardens at Salona, than he could ever receive from the possession of exalted power<sup>20</sup>. Severus, being sent by Galerius to suppress the revolt, found the task too difficult for his capacity. The majority of his troops being seduced by the arts of Maxentius, he fled to Ravenna, where he might have defended himself until the arrival of succour: but he weakly suffered himself to be deluded into a surrender by a promise of protection from Maximian, who had previously terrified him by hinting, that a disaffected party had conspired to betray him to the besiegers. He did not long remain a prisoner, being put to death by his perfidious adversary<sup>21</sup>.

The personal efforts of Galerius against the revolt were not attended with the success which he expected. He advanced into Italy with a great force: but he had no

<sup>19</sup> Eumen. Panegy. — Eutrop. — Zosim.

<sup>20</sup> Vict. de Moribus Imperat. cap. 39.

<sup>21</sup> Zosim. lib. ii. — Eutrop. lib. vi.

opportunity of engaging the enemy with effect; and, being doubtful of the attachment of a considerable part of his army, he retired before the exulting partisans of Maxentius. Apprehending a dangerous contest, he resolved to leave Italy to his competitor, and to abstain from war during the remainder of his life. To strengthen his government by association, he supplied the loss of Severus by the appointment of Licinius, an officer who had distinguished himself in the war with the Persians, but who had no other merit or excellence.

Maxentius and his father did not long agree in the exercise of power. The son wished to reign alone; and the elder prince claimed that superiority to which he thought himself entitled. As the troops favored Maxentius, the

A. D. 307. disgusted parent left Italy, and repaired to the court of Constantine, to whom he had recently given his daughter in marriage: but he could not prevail upon that prince to take arms in his cause.

Constantine had increased his military reputation by a campaign against the Franks and the Allemanni, whose royal leaders, after a considerable victory, he led into captivity: but the fame of his humanity was not enhanced by his brutal treatment of the vanquished princes, whom, at a public spectacle, he exposed to the rage of wild beasts. When he was engaged in another expedition against the Franks, Maximian endeavoured to supplant him in the possession of Gaul; seized a treasure which had been left at Arles; and bribed the soldiers of the neighbouring stations into his service: but Constantine, returning with a celerity which confounded the hopes of the treacherous prince, drove him to Marseilles, and overawed the citizens into a surrender of the fugitive, who,

A. D. 309. not being deemed worthy of mercy, was strangled by the order of his son-in-law<sup>22</sup>.

Galerius, who was considered as the chief prince of the empire, had reluctantly granted to Constantine the title and dignity of Augustus ; but he refused to confer the same favor upon Maxentius, who continued to act as master of Italy. The death of the first of these princes did not produce any addition to the territories of the other two sovereigns ; for his friends, Maximin and Licinius, took possession of the provinces which he had governed. Constantine, expecting that the ambition of these potentates would soon involve them in mutual hostilities, waited patiently for an explosion, by which he might eventually profit.

The tyranny of Maxentius excited general odium. Insatiate lust, rapine, and murder, marked his course : yet he was suffered by an enslaved people to reign for six years. After he had quelled a revolt in Africa, he prosecuted his career of oppression with redoubled fury ; and, wishing for a more extended scene of action, and more ample means of gratifying his passions, he resolved to attempt the conquest of those provinces which were subject to the sway of Constantine. At the same time, deputies were privately sent into Gaul by the harassed citizens of Rome, to supplicate the aid of that prince against their profligate and ferocious despot.

Having gained intelligence of the hostile views of the tyrant, Constantine made preparations to oppose him with vigor ; but he could not, without endangering Gaul on the side of Germany, lead to the Alps so great a force as his adversary could easily bring into the field. He trusted, however, to the admirable discipline of his military establishment, and to the courage with which his example would inspire his followers. He rapidly passed the Alps, took Susa with ease, and defeated one of the armies of Maxentius near Turin. Unwilling to leave Verona garrisoned against him, he repeatedly assaulted that strong city, which, however, he could not reduce before



he had risked an obstinate conflict. He was in great danger of being baffled on this occasion by the superiority of that force which Pompeianus, a brave and experienced commander, led against the besiegers: but the result was highly favorable to his cause.

The contest was too important to be decided in two battles. Notwithstanding the considerable diminution of the force of Maxentius, he still had an army which far outnumbered that of Constantine: but he was unable to direct its operations with judgement, skill, or vigorous efficiency. He would not even have taken the personal command of his remaining force, if the clamorous importunity of the citizens of Rome had not driven him into the field. On a former occasion, he had sent the prætorians among the people, to murder as many as they could find, either for mere amusement, or for a reason which would not have justified him in depriving a single citizen of life<sup>23</sup>: but he did not dare, at this crisis, to order a similar massacre. Reluctantly marching against the invaders, he was well supported by the prætorian batta-

Oct. 28, lions; and his cavalry fought with spirit, but not  
311. with that determined perseverance which was requisite for his success. When the horsemen had yielded to the fierce attacks of their opponents, the infantry in general ceased to resist; and another well-directed assault secured to Constantine that victory which, as he afterward assured his friends, had been promised to him by a celestial sign<sup>24</sup>. The vanquished prince fled toward the

<sup>23</sup> Euseb. Vit. Constantini, lib. i. cap. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Eusebius says, in his narrative of the life of Constantine, that, if an ordinary or obscure individual had mentioned this vision, it would not have obtained a ready belief: but that, as the emperor himself vouched for it by an oath, it was unreasonable to doubt it. He declared that he clearly saw, soon after mid-day, the sign of a cross in the sky, with this inscription upon it, "By this sign thou shalt conquer." When he had seen the same phenomenon in a dream, he ordered a standard to be framed, of which the upper part was cruciform: it was called the *labarum*, and was displayed in the field with impressive effect, in commemoration of that luminous vision, which, he said, had determined him to embrace Christianity.

Tiber, and, in endeavouring to escape over a bridge, was pushed into the river by a throng of fugitives. Oppressed by heavy armour, he was unable to swim, and was quickly drowned<sup>25</sup>.

The people were so pleased at the success of Constantine, that they did not blame him for destroying the whole family of Maxentius, or for capitally punishing the chief abettors of that odious tyrant: but, when he stigmatised and disbanded the prætorian guard, the senate and the majority of the citizens were disposed to forget the occasional cruelty of the licentious soldiers, and to lament the degradation and dispersion of their protectors.

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## LETTER XX.

### *History of the Reign of CONSTANTINE the Great.*

AS Constantine's victory was followed by the submission of Italy to his sway, the commencement of his reign, as a legitimate Roman emperor, may properly be referred to that time. He was immediately acknowledged by the senate: he entered the metropolis in triumph, and attended with zeal to the settlement both of religious and political concerns. He was so far from concealing his just preference of the Christian religion to paganism, that he ordered his effigy to be erected, bearing a cross, to intimate that he had rescued Rome from tyranny by the auspicious influence of that revered sign: and he promised to secure the votaries of the true faith against persecution, where-ever his authority and influence extended. To the

<sup>25</sup> Socrat. Hist. Eccles. lib. i.—Euseb.—Vict. Jun.—Zosim.

senate, he held out the prospect of a restitution of privileges ; but it was not his intention to perform this promise with strict fidelity. He pleased the public by the enactment of a law for the capital punishment of calumnious accusers. He also obtained the praise of rectitude, by the recall of innocent exiles, and the liberation of all who had been unjustly imprisoned ; and his benevolence was highly applauded, when he provided for the support of distressed widows and orphans, and the general relief of the poor<sup>1</sup>.

Maximin, having attached himself to Maxentius from a sense of interest, and from a similarity of character, looked upon the success of Constantine with a jealous eye ; and, as Licinius had formed an alliance with the victorious

A. D. prince, by espousing his sister, the eastern emperor resolved to invade Europe from the united motives of revenge and ambition. He suddenly appeared in Thrace, and made himself master of Byzantium ; and, as his army doubled that which Licinius brought into the field, he seemed to have obtained the victory in a fierce conflict ; but the vigor of his adversary, on a renewal of action, at length turned the tide against him ; and, being vanquished, he fled with extraordinary rapidity into Bithynia, whence he escaped to Tarsus, where he died in a wretched state both of mental and bodily disorder<sup>2</sup>. None but the immediate objects of his favor could lament the death of this cruel and profligate tyrant.

The conqueror took possession of the eastern provinces ; and, while he rioted in success, he exercised, in many instances, that wanton inhumanity which would even have disgraced his rival. Many innocent persons, upon idle pretences, were driven from the world ; and among the objects of his brutal rage were the wives of Diocle-

<sup>1</sup> Euseb. Vit. Constantini, lib. i. cap. 33—36.

<sup>2</sup> Lactant. de Mortibus Persecutorum.—Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. lib. ix.—Zosim.



tian and Galerius. It was soon after Maximin's ruin, that the former of these emperors died, more probably by a natural indisposition<sup>3</sup>; than in consequence of poison taken in despair, after he had received threatening letters from Constantine and Licinius, who accused him of favoring Maxentius and Maximin<sup>4</sup>.

If Constantine and his brother-in-law had been endowed with real dignity of mind and true elevation of sentiment, they would have been content with the ample territories which they respectively governed, and would have studiously cherished the blessings of peace and tranquillity. It has been affirmed, that a desire of relieving the Christians from oppression, and of extending their religion over all parts of the empire, prompted Constantine to make war upon Licinius<sup>5</sup>; but, that he was justified in doing evil, in the mere hope of educing good from it, a conscientious modern Christian will not, I think, be disposed to allow<sup>6</sup>. By an episcopal friend of that prince<sup>7</sup>, repeated acts of treachery, and various provocations, on the part of Licinius, are assigned as the causes of the war; and, on the other hand, two pagan writers<sup>8</sup> accuse the Christian emperor of rushing into hostilities from motives of ambition.

Neither of the rival princes made so great preparations for war, in the first instance, as might have been expected from the power of each. The two armies met in the Lower Pannonia, near Cibalis. Constantine, with a force

<sup>3</sup> Socrat. Hist. Eccles. lib. i. cap. i.—Eutrop. ix. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Vict. de Mor. Imp. cap. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Socrat. lib. i. cap. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Some affirm that we say, 'Let us do evil, that good may come;' whose damnation is just." St. Paul's Epist. to the Romans.

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius.

<sup>8</sup> These are Zosimus and Eutropius; but I ought to add, that the latter seems at the same time to allude to the simultaneous intentions of Constantine for the establishment of Christianity, when he says, *omnia efficere nitens quæ animo præparasset*. Mutual rivalry is stated by the junior Victor as the cause of the rupture, without the imputation of blame to one more than to the other.

considerably inferior to that of Licinius, gained the ad-

A. D. 313. vantage in a long-contested battle, which had commenced with the dawn ; and, when night ap-

proached, he triumphantly entered the camp of his adversary, who, after the loss of more than one half of his army, fled into Thrace. In that province the two emperors and their respective legions fought with such ardent zeal, that it could scarcely be determined to which party the victory devolved. Yet Licinius seemed to admit that his competitor had prevailed ; for he sent a messenger to propose an accommodation. A treaty was soon concluded, by which Constantine procured an important accession of territory, being declared master of all the European provinces which Licinius had governed, except Thrace<sup>9</sup>.

The plan of government which Constantine extended over his new territories surpassed the administration of the late ruler, not only with respect to policy, but in the essentials of justice and equity, and in a general regard to the welfare and accommodation of the people. The change was so perceptible and obvious, that the provincials exulted in the transfer.

In the peaceful interval which followed the treaty, the edicts of Constantine were varied and numerous. Some of these laws were frivolous ; and others were unreasonably severe ; but some were expedient and judicious. He procured accurate information of the state of all parts of his empire, visited many of the provinces, and thus enabled himself to discover all the occasions of legislation, and to adapt his means to his ends.

After some years of forbearance, the barbarians again encroached upon the frontiers of the empire. The hostilities of the Franks furnished Crispus, the eldest son of the western potentate, with an opportunity of displaying his military talents ; and the incursions of the Sarmatians

and Goths called forth the martial energies of the emperor himself, by whom the fierce intruders were repeatedly and severely chastised.

When exterior harmony had subsisted between Constantine and Licinius for almost nine years (a long term of peace in the estimate of jealous and ambitious princes), the war was vigorously renewed. The blame of the rupture is apparently less imputable to Licinius than to the lord of the West, who aimed at the undivided dominion of the Roman world. The military force, levied for the ruin of the former prince, amounted to 120,000 men, beside the cavalry<sup>10</sup>; and, to meet the threatening danger, he brought into the field 150,000 foot-soldiers and 15,000 horse; but his troops were not equal in discipline or in firmness to those of his adversary. He also provided 350 vessels of war, while Constantine had only 200.

Having fortified a camp near Adrianople, Licinius trusted to his ability of self-defence. He hoped to obstruct the passage of the Hebrus; but his enemies, discovering a fordable part at some distance from his camp, crossed the river with facility; and a select body, secretly posted in a wood, remained in readiness to assault the rear or the flank; while the rest of the army, having drawn Licinius into the open field, began to attack his front. The conflict was rather short and fierce, than long or obstinate. Constantine, who did not shrink from the greatest peril, so effectually animated his men, that they prevailed over all opposition, and made great havock among the unfortunate adherents of Licinius. The vanquished prince fled to Byzantium with all the warriors whom he could collect around him, while the rest of his force submitted to the victor<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> Zosimus adds the marines to the cavalry, and, without due discrimination, calculates the amount of both at 10,000.

<sup>11</sup> Frag. Anonymi Scriptoris.—Zosim. ii. 21.—According to this historian, 34,000 men lost their lives on the side of Licinius.



The two parties also tried their strength in a naval engagement. No advantage being obtained by either in this action, another conflict arose, in which Crispus was so eminently victorious, that the fleet of Licinius abandoned all farther contest, leaving the Hellespont open for the conveyance of provisions to the troops of Constantine, then employed in the siege of Byzantium. When this city began to be endangered by the vigor of assault, Licinius escaped to Chalcedon; and, recruiting his army, prepared for a furious collision. Constantine speedily followed him, withstood all his efforts, and finally triumphed over him. Accepting his offer of submission, he pro-

A. D. 323. mised to spare his life<sup>12</sup>; but, after a short detention, the imperial captive was put to death<sup>13</sup>.

Constantine, by this success, extended his dominions to the Tigris, and his fame to the interior of India; and his religious zeal kept pace with the gratification of his ambition. He promoted throughout the East that purity of religion which he had established in the West, and eagerly disseminated the salutary influence of the Gospel. He, at the same time, attended with diligence to political and civil concerns, and did not neglect the preservation of his own power and authority.

It was soon observed by the public, that he assumed a higher tone after his acquisition of the sole supremacy. He seemed to be so far corrupted by power, that he domineered over those whom he had formerly conciliated, and enforced laws which he had once deemed too severe for practical operation. While he continued to be liberal and indulgent to the clerical order, he oppressed his laic

<sup>12</sup> Viet. de Mor. Imp. cap. 41.—Eutrop. x. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius says, that Constantine doomed the impious tyrant and his friends to death by a just enforcement of the laws of war. He does not speak of any promise subsequent to the battle near Chalcedon.—Socrates admits, that an asylum was offered to Licinius at Thessalonica; but he affirms that the indulgence was forfeited by his seditious intrigues with the barbarians.

subjects with heavy taxation<sup>14</sup>; and he connived at the rapacity and cruelty of his friends and ministers.

Conceiving an unmanly jealousy of the merit, accomplishments, and popularity of Crispus, he listened to the calumnies which were propagated by the sycophants of his court against that amiable prince, who had for many years co-operated, under the title of Cæsar, in the task of government. He pretended to suspect his son of ambitious views, and therefore studiously discountenanced him, and subjected him to the malicious vigilance of spies. The empress Fausta, who hated her step-son (for Crispus was the offspring of a former wife) as the rival of her sons, is said to have accused him of stimulating her to an incestuous connexion<sup>15</sup>, and even of aiming at the sovereignty. Constantine, without that regular and patient investigation which even the meanest of his subjects had a right to demand, condemned to death, with unnatural barbarity, his son and associate<sup>16</sup>. Another prince, A. D. 325. who had likewise been declared Cæsar, but whose immature age precluded him from actual employment in affairs of state, soon after suffered death, apparently without even a presumption of guilt. This victim was the emperor's nephew (the son of Licinius), who was only in his thirteenth year. Fausta, being accused of a nefarious calumny by her mother-in-law Helena<sup>17</sup>, who had a great regard for Crispus and a considerable influence over her husband, is said to have been shut up until she expired in an over-heated bath<sup>18</sup>. Other capital condemnations

14 During twelve years of his reign (it was proverbially said) he was a robber.—*Vict. Jun.* It does not appear that this reproach alluded to military depredations.

15 *Zosim. lib. ii. sect. 27.*

16 *Vict. de Cæs. cap. 41.*—*Vict. Jun.*—*Ammian. xiv. 38.*—*Idatii Fast.*

17 Helena, whom *Zosimus* contemptuously and falsely calls the concubine of Constantius, was a woman of talent and respectability. She distinguished herself by her encouragement of public works, and by her liberality to the clergy, the army, and the poor.

18 *Vict. Jun.*—*Eutrop.*

followed; the majority of which were less just than the sentence against the empress.

While the emperor thus diffused terror among a people sufficiently subservient, he resolved to transmit his name with lustre to posterity, as the founder of an imperial capital. Born<sup>19</sup> and bred at a great distance from Rome,—chosen by the legions of Gaul and Britain to succeed a prince who had resigned all authority over that metropolis,—and being perhaps disgusted at the apparent zeal of the citizens for their ancient religion,—he revolved in his mind the establishment of a rival city. The admirable situation of Byzantium, on the confines of the two most flourishing divisions of the globe, had forcibly stricken him during the siege; its natural strength, and its commodious harbour, had fixed his attention; and its various capabilities determined his choice. Many of the old houses were demolished, for the erection of better mansions: a very large space was added to the extent of the former town, and new walls, extending from the Propontis to the Euxine, enclosed the added district: a spacious palace, many churches, and other public edifices, quickly rose in different parts of the chosen spot; and the population was augmented by numerous accessions from the provinces, and from Rome itself. When the new erections had made great progress, the consecration of the city was pompously celebrated: it was dedicated May 11, to the God of Martyrs, and called Constantino- 329. ple, or New-Rome<sup>20</sup>. The founder trusted, that his example, combined with the advantages and attractions of the spot, would render it the residence of future emperors.

Constantine was still super-intending the improvement of the city which bore his name, when the sanguinary dissensions between the Goths and Sarmatians seemed to call

19 At Naissus, in Upper Mœsia.

20 Euseb. Vit. Constant. lib. iv. cap. 47.—Sozomen. ii. 2.



for his powerful interference. He resolved to support the latter against the superior vigor of the former: but he was unsuccessful in his early hostilities. On a renewal of conflict, he was gratified with a signal victory, which intimidated the enemy into a desire of peace. The protected nation, being deprived of a part of the allowance which had been for some years granted by the imperial court, lost all sense of gratitude for the late important aid, and made incursions into Moesia and Thrace. Resenting this insult, Constantine encouraged (or at least suffered) the Goths to re-attack the Sarmatians, who, being brought to action near the Marisus, lost their king and A. D. the bulk of their army. The survivors, by arming 333. their slaves, retaliated upon the Goths the shock which they had sustained; but the slaves were so transported with their victory, that they rose against their masters, whom they easily expelled<sup>21</sup>. The majority of the fugitives found refuge in the dominions of Constantine; by whose ecclesiastical subjects, the doctrines of Christianity were predicated to the strangers with considerable effect.

As the remaining years of the reign of this prince were undisturbed by war or commotion<sup>22</sup>, and undistinguished by remarkable events, I shall take this opportunity of exhibiting the chief features of his policy. Like Augustus, he framed a regular plan of government; and, like that prince, he secured to himself an uncontrolled authority. He diminished the exorbitant power of the prætorian præfects, who were, in a manner, emperors without the name. He kept up the number which had for some time subsisted, and which, he thought, the extent of the empire required; but he transferred the chief military power to other officers. The præfect of the East was allowed to possess a greater degree of authority than the three other

<sup>21</sup> Euseb. Vit. Constant. lib. iv. cap. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Except an insurrection in the island of Cyprus, which Dalmatius suppressed.

officers of that denomination, namely, those of Illyria, Italy, and Gaul. These præfectures or governments were divided into dioceses, in each of which were various provinces. Each diocese had a vicar, whose power, though limited, was not too inconsiderable to afford the means of oppression. Rome had still its peculiar governor; and three prætors were commissioned to preside over the eastern capital. Consuls continued to be chosen, and their names denoted the current year; but they had no effective authority. The senate also had an appearance of power, without the substance or the reality. Exterior honors were allowed to the members; and they were permitted to discuss the concerns of policy and legislation; but the emperor cautiously obstructed every decision which did not suit his inclinations, or correspond with his purposes. The præfect of Rome, who was considered as the president of the assembly, kept the senators in courtly order, and was their ordinary judge in civil causes. They were exempt from some of the burthens to which other citizens were subjected, but were still liable to unreasonable demands and inconvenient restrictions, which testified the arbitrary power of the monarch. They could not even take a long journey without a particular license from the emperor.

Affairs of state were previously debated in a cabinet or private council, composed of the prætorian præfects and other chief ministers, beside the *comites*, or companions of the prince. Some favorites had been so called before the reign of Constantine; but he converted the term into a regular title and an official designation. He multiplied honors and offices in an extraordinary degree, and watched, with anxious jealousy, every link of the chain of government.

The distinction of patricians and plebeians had been nearly annihilated in the successive political and civil changes; and the former title, under his sway, was merely

a personal grant of honor for life. Those who enjoyed it were next in rank to the consuls, and superior in that respect even to the præfects; and, they had constant freedom of access to their sovereign, they had opportunities of procuring various employments, which were more acceptable than empty honors.

To the military administration, at a time when the empire was endangered by barbarian hostilities, this prince thought it necessary to pay particular attention. Two officers were appointed to super-intend the concerns of the army. They were styled *masters of the soldiers*; and, while one had the chief authority over the cavalry, the other directed the operations of the infantry. As the provincial governors were no longer at the head of the legions, they had not the same means of revolt which many of them<sup>23</sup> formerly enjoyed: and there was a greater chance of jealousy and discord than of union and concert between them and the military commanders. But, while there was less risque of revolt, there was less security against the mischiefs of foreign war.

All the anxiety of Constantine for the repression of barbarian irruptions, and his severe edicts against negligence, or want of indefatigable vigilance, in the conduct of the officers who were appointed to guard the most endangered stations, did not sufficiently obviate the dreaded evil, while the frontier garrisons, or the troops upon whose service the safety of the empire seemed principally to rest, were much less liberally treated, in point of pay and of privilege, than the soldiers of the interior. At the same time, the emperor's favorite principles of division and multiplication operated in the arrangement of the legions. He formed them into many parts, and dispersed them in numerous stations, with a view of diminishing the danger of seditious concert.

<sup>23</sup> Namely, those who had the emperor's provinces, instead of the dependencies which the senate ostensibly governed,



It may be doubted by some, whether the division of the empire was more beneficial than injurious. If the enormous extent of the Roman world seemed to form an unwieldy mass, the formation of two seats of empire might apparently promise to facilitate the task of government; and, on the other hand, it might have been apprehended, that the separation would introduce rivalry and dissension, and preclude that concentration and friendly union which the general security required. Constantine, however, while he preferred the East to the West, maintained the dependence of one portion upon the other, and preserved a concatenation of interest.

After a long reign, in which he displayed prudence and judgement, with an occasional alloy of impolicy, and exhibited a mixture of good and bad qualities, this prince <sup>May 22,</sup> <sup>336,</sup> signed his breath to the attacks of disease, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, leaving the empire exposed to the risque of civil discord and foreign hostility.

## LETTER XXI.

*The ROMAN and GRECIAN History, from the Separation of the WESTERN and EASTERN Empires, to the Death of JULIAN.*

A. D. 336. As Constantine had taught his sons to expect an equality of power, the eldest, without presuming to insist upon the sole supremacy, as due to his birth, acquiesced in a division of the empire; but the three Cæsars resolved not to pay the least regard to the declared intentions of the late emperor in favor of his two nephews, Dalmatius and Hannibalianus, who, with the uncles of the new emperors, and other individuals of the family, were murdered by the soldiers, either from a spontaneous de-

sire of securing the sons of the great Constantine against ambitious rivalry, or (as may be more readily believed) at the instigation of Constantius, a depraved and inhuman prince<sup>1</sup>.

The partition of territory was adjusted by the three brothers with an appearance of mutual satisfaction. Germany, Gaul, Britain, and the western peninsula, were assigned to Constantine, the second of the name : the Asiatic dependencies were awarded to Constantius ; and the youngest son undertook the government of Italy, Greece, Illyria, Thrace, and the African provinces<sup>2</sup>.

However amicable the fraternal agreement might seem to be, Constantine was soon influenced, by ambition and self-interest, to violate some of the stipulations : but he for some time concealed his sinister aims, in expectation of an opportunity of accomplishing them. In the mean while, each of the princes enacted judicious regulations, both in civil and criminal affairs. Constantius, in particular, adjusted by various edicts the government and privileges of corporations : but, amidst these tranquil pursuits, the report of an invasion called him into the field.

A. D.

The Armenians expelled a royal vassal of Rome, and, in concert with the Persians, invaded Mesopotamia : but they failed in the siege of Nisibis. Constantius marched to chastise them ; and, while the Persians avoided a dangerous conflict by retreat, he restored the prince who had been deposed. For the future molestation of the enemy, he entered into a treaty with the Arabs of the desert, by whose alertness of hostility he hoped to diminish materially the labors of the legionaries. The war which thus arose continued for many years, chiefly to the disadvantage of the Romans.

337.

1 Eutropius, speaking of the assassination of Dalmatius, says, that Constantius *suffered* rather than *ordered* the deed to be perpetrated : but the emperor Julian and Zosimus accuse that prince of the unprovoked murder.

2 Vict. de Vit. et Moribus Imperatorum, cap. 41.

Leaving Constantius unmolested on account of the remoteness of his territories, Constantine formed the resolution of invading the dominions of Constans, at a time when this prince had no apprehension of such an act of perfidy. The irruption, if the army had been numerous and well-disciplined, might have been attended with the

A. D. conquest of one or more provinces : but it was an  
339. ill-conducted enterprise, and was consequently baffled with little difficulty, not requiring the personal efforts of Constans. The invaders were seduced into an ambuscade near Aquileia ; and their leader lost his life by the folly of unprincipled ambition<sup>3</sup>. He is represented, by an anonymous contemporary writer, as a prince of considerable merit : but he seems to have displayed, during his reign, a very small portion of excellence.

It might have been expected that Constantius would interfere on this occasion, and not suffer his younger brother to be aggrandised, without claiming a share of the forfeited territories. But the eastern emperor, who would readily have accepted an offered province, was not disposed to take arms for the acquisition of a share of the spoils of his ill-fated brother. He was unwilling to have Constans for his enemy, and therefore acquiesced in the transfer of provincial Germany and all the western parts of Europe to the master of Italy.

A. D. Constans was soon disturbed in the possession  
340. of Gaul by an invasion of the Franks, whom he encountered in the midst of their ravages. He checked their progress, but did not over-awe them into submission before the next year, when some of their most warlike communities were admitted to the subserviency of an alliance<sup>4</sup>. The attacks of the northern Britons upon the provincials soon after called him into our island ; and he so

<sup>3</sup> Eutrop. lib. x. cap. 9.—Socrat. ii. 3.—Sozomen. iii. 2.—Zosinus erroneously represents Constans as the ambitious aggressor.

<sup>4</sup> Socrat. lib. ii. cap. 10.



far repressed the violence of those depredators, that, for many subsequent years, they gave little disturbance to the southern natives. A. D. 342.

While Constantius prosecuted the war against the Persians with indecisive efforts, his brother kept the European continent in a state of peace. Although this fact may entitle him to some praise, he did not govern with extraordinary ability, or promote with zeal the happiness of his people. He suffered his ministers to tyrannise over them with impunity; and, while they were impoverished and disgusted by his rapacity, he did not endeavour to secure his power by courting the soldiers, whose protection might have shielded him against general odium.

In the course of the Persian war, the strong town of Nisibis was again besieged without effect; and the neighbourhood of Singara was the scene of a remarkable conflict, in which Constantius and Sapor personally A. D. 347. contended. The Persian camp was well-fortified; and the banks of the Tigris, some hills, and a spacious plain; exhibited a numerous army prepared for vigorous action. The archers discharged such a profusion of arrows, that the legionaries were checked in their advance: but they were not seriously discouraged; for, when they approached the enemy, they made a powerful impression upon the heavy-armed cavalry, and spread confusion among the ranks. They at length reached the camp, and took it by a furious assault. The emperor would have repressed that eagerness which led them on the approach of night to this attack, for which, he said, the morning would be much more opportune: but the impatient warriors disregarded the suggestions of prudence, and were employed in plundering the camp, when the Persians, hastening from the eminences, so fiercely assailed the intruders, that the supposed victory was changed into a calamitous defeat.

5 Rufi Brev.—Eutrop.

A. D. 349. After an interval of inaction, the siege of Nisibis was renewed: but the besiegers were constrained to relinquish the enterprise, after the loss of 20,000 men. Sapor, perhaps, would not have risked this disastrous attempt, if he had not concluded that the disorders which had arisen in the western empire would engross the attention of Constantius.

The odium which Constans had excited by his misgovernment, at length exposed him to the greatest danger. Magnentius, an adventurer of barbarian origin, who enjoyed an important military command, seduced some distinguished officers, and a considerable part of the army, into a revolt; and, having seized the public treasure at Autun, he sent a detachment in pursuit of the emperor, who, being apprised of these treasonable acts while he was amusing himself with the chase, fled with celerity, but could not escape the murderous hands of the rebels<sup>6</sup>. We might be astonished at the facility with which he was deprived of a power that he had long enjoyed, if we did not reflect on the alienation both of the soldiery and the people from his interest. The clergy were his friends, because they had experienced his liberality, and had found him ready to support the cause of orthodoxy against Arianism: but they had not sufficient power to avert his ruin.

The daring rebel soon extended his authority from the Danube to the Atlantic ocean; but a competitor arose in the Illyrian government. Vetricius, an officer who had conciliated the affection of the troops in that præfecture, and who, amidst the most disgraceful illiteracy, had sustained the character of a man of integrity and virtue, was encouraged by the soldiers to assume the imperial dignity<sup>7</sup>. He would not have revolted from Constans; but, when he had lost his sovereign, he was willing to follow

6 Vict. de Mor. Imp. cap. 41.—Socrat. ii. 19.—Zosim.

7 Eutrop. lib. x. cap. 10.

the example of Magnentius, with whom he concluded an alliance.

Both usurpers applied to Constantius for his acknowledgement of their pretensions, and even for his friendship and support. While he disdained the thought of negotiating with Magnentius, and resolved to act against him with the most resolute vigor, he privately treated with Vetrano, and employed emissaries to reclaim the soldiers to that loyalty which was due to the family of the great Constantine. In a meeting near Sardica, he harangued the troops of the Illyrian general in a studied speech; and he had scarcely concluded his appeal to their sense of honor and justice, when they loudly called for a resignation on the part of their commander. By a ready compliance, Vetrano saved his life, and was maintained in retirement by a pension from the imperial treasury<sup>8</sup>.

As the impending war with Magnentius bore a dangerous aspect, the emperor became sensible of the expediency of consigning the eastern provinces to the government of a prince of his family, that he might be free from all extrinsic anxiety during the prosecution of the contest for the western sovereignty. His cousin Gallus, who had escaped from that massacre which disgraced the commencement of the reign of Constantius, was now declared Cæsar, and permitted to marry the sister of his reconciled patron. The choice was not altogether judicious; but it satisfied, for a time, the emperor's mind, and allayed his apprehensions of the effects of Persian hostilities.

The ambition of Magnentius was accompanied (according to the practice of those times) with execrable cruelty. Having defeated near Rome the partisans of Nepotianus, a nephew of the first Constantine, he not only put him and his mother to death, but wreaked his vengeance upon a

<sup>8</sup> Sozomen. lib. iv. cap. 3.—Zosim. ii. 41.



great number of citizens, whom he suspected of favoring the cause of that rebel. His rapacity was, at the same time, exercised in multiplied seizures of property, on pretence of the necessity of defending the western provinces against the injustice of Constantius. When he had levied a formidable army, he met the eastern potentate in Pannonia; and such a battle ensued near Mursa, as seemed to threaten the utter ruin of that party which should be vanquished. The victory was contested with uncommon pertinacity; and, when it ultimately devolved to the lawful emperor, he found that he had purchased it with a greater loss than that which he inflicted.

This conflict not being decisive, another campaign was deemed necessary; for the usurper refused to submit; and Constantius, although in a moment of timidity he had offered to confirm his adversary in the possession of the Gallic præfecture, was unwilling to renew a rejected offer.

A. D. 351. The war was now transferred to Italy; and, with little effusion of blood, the emperor obtained complete possession of that country. Driven into Gaul, the humbled tyrant promised submission, and implored pardon, which Constantius peremptorily refused to grant.

A. D. 352. In another trial of his fortune, Magnentius was unable to withstand the vigor of the imperial arms. He fled to Lyons in despair, and, to avoid the death of a criminal, pierced himself with his own sword.<sup>9</sup> By an universal submission of his partisans to Constantius, the usurpation was extinguished; and the Roman world was again subject to a sole master.

If Constantius had possessed true magnanimity, he would have contented himself with the punishment of the principal abettors of the treason of Magnentius; but he was pleased with a pretence and an opportunity of extending over the western provinces the rigors of revenge. A

multitude of persons, in various ranks of life, were put to death: others, after being wantonly tortured, were deprived of their property, and banished. Of these victims of tyranny, many were entirely innocent. The imperial officers and judges were not very desirous of investigating the truth of the respective accusations; and, if a vile informer appeared, his testimony was admitted as unexceptionable and conclusive. When a mandate of death had been sent forth, a subsequent discovery of innocence would rarely induce the emperor or his ministers to revoke it<sup>10</sup>.

Constantius, having established his power in the West, had full leisure to attend to the concerns of the East. He found that Gallus, by the efforts of his lieutenants, had checked the career of the Isaurian banditti, repressed the desultory hostilities of the Persians, and quelled the turbulence of some Jewish tribes: but, at the same time, he could not avoid perceiving that his cousin was unqualified for the task of government. The incompetency of Gallus for that honorable employment was soon discovered even by the least discerning portion of the community; and his injustice and cruelty were as glaring as his ignorance and absurdity. His own passions were sufficient for every iniquitous and tyrannical purpose, without requiring the influence of a furious and blood-thirsty wife to render him still more criminal and odious. Even Constantius was disgusted at the shameful misgovernment of the prince whom he had elevated to power. There are *shades* and *degrees* in tyranny, vice, and wickedness. The emperor was certainly an oppressor of his people; but he was not so flagitious a tyrant as Gallus.

Finding his relative intractable and incorrigible, Constantius resolved to deprive him of his power. While a scarcity of provision harassed and exasperated the citi-

zens of Antioch, Gallus, instead of taking proper measures <sup>A. D.</sup> for their relief, surrendered the innocent go- <sup>393</sup> vernor of the province to their fury. He was soon after visited by the præfect Domitian, who, in the emperor's name, desired the offending prince to hasten into Italy. This officer being taken into custody for threatening Gallus with a restriction of his domestic allowance, the quæstor Montius still farther irritated the prince, by complaining of the unworthy treatment of his dignified friend; and the consequences were fatal to the two officers, who were seised by the guard, and murdered with torture and ignominy<sup>11</sup>.

Gallus now prosecuted, with redoubled zeal, a course of rapine and cruelty; and, on the other hand, Constantius renewed his private consultations upon the most effectual means of crushing or deposing an unworthy prince. The presence of the minister Ursicinus at Milan was first requested, that he might deliver his weighty opinions, and give useful political advice. Gallus was afterward invited for the same purpose; and his wife was also desired to repair to her brother's court; but she died in her progress, to the great regret of the obnoxious prince, who trusted to her influence for a reconciliation with Constantius. After her death, he resisted all attempts that were made to draw him from the East, until the arguments and representations of a military messenger, who united persuasive artifice with an apparent frankness and simplicity of manners, subdued his reluctance. To prevent him from influencing the soldiers, orders had been given for their removal from the towns through which his *route* lay: he was closely watched by officers who were in the emperor's interest, and was precluded from an opportunity of accepting an offer of service from troops stationed in Thrace. He now became fully sensible of his danger; and, being

<sup>11</sup> Ammian. lib. xiv. sect. 20—23.



imprisoned at Pola as a criminal, he bitterly bewailed the severity of his fate. When he was interrogated on the subject of his atrocious cruelties, he accused his wife of having instigated him to those violent acts; but this weak apology could not be admitted as a reasonable excuse. Constantius resolved to withhold mercy from one who, in his treatment of the numerous objects of his tyranny, had very rarely exercised that quality. He sent an order for the decapitation of Gallus, who, finding opposition fruitless, patiently submitted to his doom<sup>12</sup>.

Julian was in some danger of sharing the fate of his brother. It was affirmed, that he had left his retreat with a view of giving advice personally to Gallus; and it was hinted that he would be an avenger of the death of that prince. He was sent to Italy, and detained a prisoner for some months; but, having found a friend in Eusebia, the wife of Constantius, he was permitted to retire to Athens for the prosecution of his studies. In the mean time, his brother's friends were tortured, banished, or obliged to serve in the lowest ranks of the army; and many A. D. 354. were put to death, without due discrimination between innocence and guilt<sup>13</sup>.

While the emperor was thus inflicting arbitrary venge-

12 Ammian. lib. xiv. sect. 34—38. — This historian admits the criminality of Gallus; but intimates his detestation of the treachery of Scudilo (the officer who inveigled the prince to his ruin), and of count Barbatio, who, though he belonged to his household, promoted the views of his imperial adversary; and expresses his joy at the fate of both. One died, soon after, of a painful disorder: the other was put to death for an irregular and precipitate attempt to advance his political fortune. Undoubtedly those officers deserved blame; and they were perhaps actuated only by motives of self-interest, in bringing Gallus to justice; but, when the effect is considered,—namely, the relief of oppressed provincials from inhuman and horrible tyranny,—their conduct will not be severely stigmatised by the friends of humanity. The joy of Ammianus is apparently misplaced: he ought rather to have rejoiced at the tyrant's fall.

Zosimus says, that Dynamius and Picentius were the chief promoters of the destruction of Gallus, whom they accused of an intention of usurping the supremacy. It does not appear that this charge was true.

13 Ammian. lib. xv. sect. 3, 4.

ance, he was alarmed at the rumors of barbarian hostility. Hastening into Rhætia, he sent Arbetio to repel the Allemanni. That commander, proceeding without caution, fell into an ambuscade, and lost a multitude of his men: but he soon found an opportunity of vengeance; and the invaders were totally routed. In Gaul, which was also invaded, Sylvanus was preparing to act with vigor, when the malice of his enemies, by a forged communication to the emperor, subjected him to a charge of treason. The falsehood of the accusation was discovered; but, before he was informed of the ascertainment of his innocence, he was encouraged by his friends to defend himself, by a revolt, against the danger of condemnation and death. He listened to this advice; and, with the consent of the soldiers, assumed the imperial ensigns: but his reign was short; for Ursicinus, being sent with a small party to the usurper's station, deluded him by assurances of friendship, murdered him in his way to a Christian place of worship, and recalled the troops to their allegiance<sup>14</sup>.

As the unchecked barbarians menaced Gaul and other provinces with subjugation, the expediency of choosing an associate forcibly struck Constantius. However exalted was his opinion of his own merit, he was constrained to acknowledge his insufficiency for the effectual defence of so extensive an empire. His courtiers assured him, that a prince of his courage and ability was fully equal even to the complicated operations and weighty concerns of the greatest government upon earth: but Eusebia recommended the appointment of a Cæsar, and pointed out Julian as a deserving youth, whose talents would render him useful, while his modesty and prudence would keep him within those bounds which a subject ought not to transgress. The emperor assented to the propriety of the sug-

14 Ammian. lib. xv. sect. 6—14. — Sozomen. iv. 6.

gestion, and invited to his palace a relative whom he wished to honor. Julian was at first unwilling to answer the call, more probably from a dread of the cruelty of Constantius, than from a want of ambition<sup>15</sup>; but his hesitation yielded to the request of his sovereign; and he appeared at the court of Milan with the air of a philosopher. Being presented by Constantius to the soldiers, he was readily accepted as the new Cæsar; and strong hopes were entertained, that his future conduct would sanction the appointment. Consanguineous ties were strengthened by those of affinity; for Helena, the emperor's sister, was given in marriage to the associated prince<sup>16</sup>.

When Julian arrived in Gaul, the state of that country, on the side of Germany, was particularly distressful. Ruined towns and ravaged districts afforded melancholy proofs of the success of the barbarians: the provincials were intimidated and depressed by the ferocity of the enemy; and the legionaries, ill-supplied with the means of subsistence and of defence, were almost as spiritless as the people. Julian's first campaign was less for-  
A. D. 355.  
tunate than his friends expected. His rear-guard being suddenly assaulted by the Allemanni, two legions were in great danger; but they were rescued from destruction by opportune aid. He afterward dislodged the enemy from various posts; and, being attacked in the chief town of the Senones, he bravely defended the place, and wearied the besiegers into a retreat.

The next campaign was more effective, more  
A. D. 356.  
honorable and glorious. A numerous host, led by Chonodomar, a powerful king of the Allemanni, crossed the Rhine near Argentoratum<sup>17</sup>; and a haughty mes-

15 "He trembled (says Gibbon) for his life, for his fame, and even for his virtue:" but, if he apprehended that his virtue might be lost or weakened in the relaxing atmosphere of a court, he had not the genuine fortitude of a philosopher. It was certainly in his power to cherish the love and practice of virtue, amidst the sneers of ridicule and the prevalence of corrupt example.

16 Ammian. lib. xv. sect. 19—22.

17 Strasbourg, in Alsace.



sage was sent to the Roman general, desiring him to retire from that territory which had been acquired by German valor. Julian smiled at the insult, and, with a small force, boldly advanced to meet the invaders. A body of heavy-armed cavalry, reckoned among the best combatants in his army, fled in confusion, while the rest of the troops fought with their usual spirit. "For what purpose do we retreat?" said Julian mildly to the intimidated horsemen, as if he had given the example of recoiling—"there is no safety in flight." They soon returned to the charge, and endeavoured to retrieve their credit. After a long contest between the infantry, the barbarians began to give way; and they were at length totally defeated, with the slaughter of 6000 men, beside a great number of fugitives who perished in the river. Chonodomar was eagerly pursued; and, finding escape impracticable, he surrendered himself to a tribune, with three friends who were so attached to him, that, if he had fallen in the battle, they would not have survived him. He was sent to the court of Constantius; and, being unable to bear with composure the disgrace of defeat and the irksomeness of captivity, he died of wounded feelings, rather than of any organic disorder<sup>18</sup>.

In the joy and elation of victory, the legionaries saluted their gallant commander with the title of Augustus, considering him as equally entitled with Constantius to all the power and authority of an emperor. He reprimanded them for their officious zeal, declaring, with an oath, that he neither expected nor desired that honor. He wished, however, to prove himself, by a continuance of bold exertions, worthy of the applause of his fellow-soldiers.

While Julian was usefully employed, the emperor was not wholly inactive. Drawn into the field by the hostilities of the Quadi, he did not merely repel them, but con-

<sup>18</sup> Ammian, lib. xvii. sect. 22, 29—34.

ducted his legions over the Danube into their country, and humbled a ferocious enemy into a desire of peace. He then turned his arms against a community consisting chiefly of slaves, who had formed a new government upon the subjugation or expulsion of the free-born Sarmatians; and, restoring the latter to their power and territory, he gave the royal title to one of their most respectable chiefs, whose attachment he thus secured. He, at the same time, claimed the principal merit of Julian's success, even omitting (in his letters and rescripts to the senate and the provincial governors) the name of the general who led the troops to victory.

Julian continued to distinguish himself both in war and in the art of government. In both departments, he evinced a zealous attention to all parts of his duty. Advancing against the Franks, he enforced the submission of two of the nations of their confederacy. He proceeded A. D. to attack the Allemanni; and they were so 357. intimidated by his progress and his efforts, that their chief princes submitted to his dictates, restored 20,000 captives, and bound themselves to a discontinuance of their incursions. He afterward repaired the towns upon which the invaders had exercised their fury; supplied the urgent wants of the provincials and the troops with copious importations of corn from Britain; redressed the grievances of which the former complained, and allayed, by his prudence and firmness, the occasional discontent of the latter; distributed justice, softened by equity; alleviated the rigors of taxation; gave new vigor to the useful arts, and fresh spirit to commerce.

Constantius did not treat, as a friend, the prince whom he had invested with power. He employed emissaries to watch his movements, and tutored the provincial officers to encroach upon his authority. Julian was disgusted at this illiberality; but his moderation disposed him to submit, in general, to the will of the emperor, whose resentment

might otherwise have provoked him to annul the Caesarian appointment.

A war with the Persians, at this time, occupied the chief attention of Constantius. It arose from the ambition of Sapor, not from any recent act of Roman aggression. He demanded, as the price of continued peace, the complete cession of Mesopotamia, and a renunciation of all pretensions to Armenia; and, on the rejection of his

A. D. 358. overtures, he invaded the former province with a numerous host, and formed the siege of Amida.

The town was resolutely defended for ten weeks. The siege being ably conducted according to the Roman-practice, in which the Persians were instructed by deserters, the place was taken by assault; and a general massacre ensued, in revenge for the very severe loss sustained by the besieging army<sup>19</sup>. Some of the legionaries who had escaped from the slaughter were put to death, as if they had neglected their duty; and Ursicinus, who had been intrusted with the defence of the invaded territory, was dismissed from his command at the instigation of a rival general, by whom his schemes were thwarted and his operations impeded. In the next campaign, two strong

A. D. 359. towns were taken by the Persians, with all their defenders; and one of them<sup>20</sup>, being well garrisoned by the captors, baffled all the efforts of Constantius for it's recovery.

The continuance of the Persian war furnished the emperor with a pretence for recalling four legions from Gaul, while his real motive for sending such an order arose from his jealousy of the views of Julian. He knew that his own character and conduct did not entitle him to high esteem, on the part of that prince: he apprehended that the troops might be induced to bestow the imperial dignity upon their victorious commander; and he therefore re-

<sup>19</sup> This loss is estimated by Ammianus at 30,000 men.

<sup>20</sup> Called Bezabde.



solved to diminish the strength and resources of a dreaded competitor. Julian was unwilling to deprive either himself or the province of so useful a body of protectors: yet, as if he wished to avoid the charge of seditious disobedience, he ordered his officers to execute the imperial will. One division of the troops marched forward; and other detachments were preparing to follow, when the repugnance of the legionaries to the proposed journey prompted them to a bold and licentious act. On a spacious plain near Paris, the general harangued them in recommendation of obedience; and, in the evening, he gave a banquet to the officers, still disguising every sentiment of ambition. In the night, the troops rushed from their quarters, and loudly declared Julian emperor. He affected extreme reluctance, but at length gave way to their importunities, and accepted an honor to which he secretly aspired<sup>21</sup>.

In announcing to the emperor the military election, to which, he said, he was compelled by menaces of personal violence to submit, he suggested a compromise; declaring his readiness to acquiesce in the superiority of Constantius, to employ a prætorian commander nominated by him, and to send annually a body of young barbarian warriors, to be incorporated with the troops of his august relative, on condition of being allowed to act as sovereign of Spain, Gaul, and provincial Britain. This presumptuous overture was indignantly rejected by Constantius, who insisted upon the abandonment of a title unlawfully assumed, and commanded the immediate return of the offender to the humble rank of a subject. After an

21 Ammian. lib. xx. sect. 5—9.—Zosim. iii. 14.—Europ. x. 15.—Gibbon seems unwilling to dispute the veracity of his favorite Julian, who solemnly declared, that, before the tumultuous meeting, he was “utterly ignorant of the designs of the soldiers:” yet, he fairly admits, that a zeal for paganism might prompt the prince “to desire, to solicit, and even to hasten, “the auspicious moment of his reign, which was predestined to restore the “ancient religion of mankind.”

insincere negotiation, both princes prepared for war. Julian renounced all submission to a potentate whom he considered as his determined enemy, and trusted to the legions of Gaul for the defence of his person and government<sup>22</sup>.

Resolving to act offensively, instead of awaiting an attack from Constantius, he directed his course to the Danube with a select body, while the rest of his army advanced in two divisions by different routes. Finding a *flotilla* on the river, he sailed down with uncommon rapidity, and, as soon as he had disembarked, proceeded to attack Sirmium. He was agreeably surprised by the immediate surrender of that city; and, having also secured an important mountainous post on the borders of Thrace, he prepared with his whole force to prosecute his success.

Constantius pretended to be wholly unconcerned at the first intelligence of the revolt of his cousin; but, when the progress of the new emperor was reported, he could not conceal his apprehensions. He sent forward some troops to meet the revolvers in Thrace, and, with the same view, commenced a personal expedition, even when the winter was approaching. He reached Tarsus without any unpleasant occurrences, except omens which alarmed his superstition. As he proceeded, his frame exhibited symptoms of a fever; but, as the disorder was not violent, he continued his journey, thinking that gentle exercise would restore his health. Fatigue and anxiety, however,

Nov. 3. aggravated his indisposition: he stopped on the  
360. confines of mount Taurus; and death closed his long reign<sup>23</sup>.

This prince had an inconsistent character. He was sometimes mild and merciful: on other occasions, particularly when he suspected, or merely fancied, that his authority was exposed to the smallest danger, he was bru-

<sup>22</sup> Ammian. lib. xx. et xxi.—Zosim. iii. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ammian. lib. xxi. sect. 13, 28, 29.—Vict. de Mor. Imp. cap. 42.

tally inhuman<sup>24</sup>. He had the arrogant pride of rank and power; yet was so meanly groveling, as to be almost a slave to the contemptible eunuchs of his court. While he hated philosophers and literary men, he encouraged learning by the formation of public libraries. He wished to be an able and fluent speaker; but, when he found that he could not, with all his endeavours, obtain the praise of eloquence, except from parasites, who attributed to him the qualifications which he did not possess, he looked with an unfriendly eye upon distinguished orators. As a statesman, he did not shine; nor was he a skilful general. The virtues of temperance and chastity are ascribed to him; and it is also affirmed<sup>25</sup>, that he was uncommonly liberal to his friends, and grateful for services: but it cannot fairly be admitted, that he was a great, a wise, or an amiable prince.

The courtiers would have filled the vacant throne by the election of a friend, if the troops had not insisted upon the acknowledgement of Julian's pretensions. As soon as he was informed of the emperor's death, he advanced to his native town of Constantinople, where his reception was truly flattering. The reputation of his learning and eloquence, the fame of his Gallic administration and his military exploits, drew every eye upon him; and the consideration of his religion neither damped the general joy, nor diminished the general admiration.

His first object was the punishment of guilt. He commissioned six of his friends to investigate the public conduct of those who had enjoyed high offices under the defunct prince. Eusebius, who, with the appointment of chamberlain, had acted as chief minister, and had committed many enormities, suffered death by a sentence of these judicial delegates. Paul the notary, who had atro-

<sup>24</sup> Under the influence of these suspicions or fancies (says Ammianus), he even exceeded the cruelty of Caligula, Domitian, and Commodus.

<sup>25</sup> By his contemporary Eutropius.



ciously tyrannised over the provincials of Britain; and Apodemius, who had eagerly promoted the death of Gal-  
lus, but whose criminality was far greater in the ruin of  
many innocent citizens; were also capitally punished,  
and died unlamented. The fugitive consul Florentius  
was condemned to death; but he escaped, by a conceal-  
ment of his person, the vengeance of the ruling party.  
Taurus, the other consul, was banished during his own  
magistracy, although no crime could be proved against  
him. The treasurer Ursulus, having offended the soldiers  
by reflecting upon their want of spirit in the defence of  
Amida, fell a victim to their resentment. They malig-  
nantly demanded his condemnation; and the judges were  
not so firmly conscientious, as to refuse compliance. As  
he had assisted Julian with financial supplies in the go-  
vernment of Gaul, and supported his cause against the  
other ministers of the late sovereign, the emperor's con-  
nivance at his murder was loudly and justly blamed<sup>26</sup>.

A. D. 361. After a display of zealous attention to political  
affairs, to legislative, judicial, and civil concerns,  
Julian fully disclosed to the world his apostasy from the  
Christian religion, which he had reluctantly professed in his  
youth. His passionate regard for the philosophy and learn-  
ing of the Greeks indisposed him to the favorable reception  
or belief of the doctrines which Constantine had imbibed  
and recommended; and he condemned, as unreasonable  
and impious, that system which deserved high respect  
and reverence. He did not, however, follow the exam-  
ple of Diocletian or Galerius, who were cruel persecutors  
of that faith which they disapproved. He contented him-  
self, amidst ostensible toleration, with discountenancing  
the professors of Christianity, while he encouraged the  
dissensions which had arisen among them<sup>27</sup>. To their pa-  
gan adversaries he gave full permission to re-open the

<sup>26</sup> Ammian. lib. xxii. sect. 3, 4.

<sup>27</sup> This motive is assigned by Sozomen for his recall of those prelates and

temples, renew the sacrifices, and revive the whole train of idolatrous ceremonies ; and he felt the greatest pleasure in performing the offices usually assigned to the lowest ministers of his religion. So numerous were the sacrifices at which he officiated, so many hecatombs were offered by his devout zeal, that the revenue materially suffered by his superstitious prodigality. In another respect, the people complained of his profusion. Philosophers, orators, soothsayers, and magical impostors, met with a friendly reception at his court, received liberal presents, and flattered the vain prince into the grant of valuable estates. He also expended considerable sums in rewarding those legionaries who were willing to relapse into paganism. At the same time, he deprived the Christian clergy of those emoluments and allowances which they had been accustomed to receive from the treasury, and also obstructed private posthumous grants to that order of men.

The zeal of the two parties occasioned warm disputes and bitter altercations in all the provinces of the empire ; and, in some cities, disorder, riot, and outrage, ensued. When the pagans were the aggressors, they were favored by a partial prince ; while the Christian disturbers of the peace were reviled and punished. Julian, while he affected the calmness of a philosopher, sometimes vented his ill humour in coarse invectives and strong menaces against the followers of Jesus<sup>28</sup> ; and there is little doubt, that, if his reign had been prolonged, his humanity would

other ecclesiastics who had been banished by Constantius for their opposition to Arianism.

Our James the Second, in endeavouring to restore the Romish faith, adopted a plan of operations resembling the course which Julian so eagerly prosecuted. He professed an intension of tolerating all creeds and all modes of worship : he fomented dissensions among the opposers of his own system : he studiously discouraged them, and took every opportunity of removing them from power and office. He had not the abilities or the vigor of Julian ; but he was equally inflamed by senseless superstition and inflexible bigotry.

<sup>28</sup> Juliani Epist. in variis locis.

have gradually given way to the ferocity of persecution<sup>29</sup>.

His regard for religion did not so far humanise him, as to prevent him from engaging in an unnecessary war. He aspired to the glory of a successful expedition against the Persians; and no considerations of prudence or propriety could divert him from his hostile purpose. Making a preparatory progress through Asia Minor, he distributed justice, in the majority of cases which came before him, with an impartiality which candid Christians were ready to acknowledge: but, during his residence at Antioch, he was guilty of various acts of injustice, and even of cruelty. His gross superstition, his literary vanity, his unpleasing figure, aukward address, and reprehensible neglect of neatness in his person, exposed him to the sarcastic railery of the citizens, who also reprobated his occasional severities. Against these attacks he defended himself by a composition of some humor and merit, in which he satirised the Antiochians for their luxurious indulgences and voluptuary dissipation, their selfishness, their want of honor and virtue. He increased his unpopularity among them by his injudicious mode of obviating the miseries of famine; for he fixed the price of corn at so low a rate, that the dealers in that necessary article withheld it from the people of Antioch, and chose other towns as preferable

A. D. 362. markets. Before he left that city, he testified his resentment against the inhabitants by an unjustifiable grant of the highest judicial station in Syria to one Alexander, who was not qualified either by abilities or integrity for the proper discharge of such an important duty. To the wishes which the people expressed for his fortunate return, he gave a contemptuous reply, inti-

<sup>29</sup> This is a fair conclusion from numerous instances of the apostate's intemperate zeal, and of his increasing detestation of the Christians; but Gibbon, who is obviously partial to this pagan bigot, considers every apprehension of this kind as a gross calumny.



mating that he would never condescend to re-visit their city.

Having conducted his army over the Euphrates by a bridge of boats, he proceeded to Carrhæ, where he divided his force<sup>30</sup>, sending Procopius to the northward, to ravage the Median territories, and form a junction with the king of Armenia, while he passed near the river toward the south. He intended that both divisions should meet in the vicinity of Ctesiphon, and that this city should be attacked with a degree of vigor which would ensure its reduction. In his march from the Euphrates to the Tigris, he easily repelled the hovering parties of the enemy: some towns, which were taken by assault, were pillaged and destroyed; and the invaders, animated with hope, approached the capital. The Tigris, however, still presented a formidable obstacle to the army, even after the *flotilla* had passed by a canal from one river to the other. The danger of crossing in the face of an enemy who lined the lofty banks, did not deter the warlike emperor, although the soldiers manifested a strong reluctance. He sent off a body of legionaries at night to make the attempt; and, when flames were discerned in some of the transports, occasioned (as he well knew) by the combustibles thrown into them from the opposite bank, he exclaimed that the detachment, having passed in safety, had exhibited lights as a signal of success. A multitude soon followed in other vessels, and gained the bank amidst a shower of missiles. For the twelve ensuing hours, the troops were closely engaged. The Persians at length fled; but the Romans, instead of endeavouring to enter Ctesiphon with the fugitives, lost time in plundering the well-stored camp<sup>31</sup>.

When the rest of the troops had passed the Tigris, it was debated in council, whether Ctesiphon should be besieged; and, as the city was remarkably strong, it was

<sup>30</sup> Amounting to 65,000 men.

<sup>31</sup> Ammian. lib. xxiii. et xxiv.—Sozomen. vi. 1.—Zosim. iii.

deemed imprudent to assault it, without the aid of that division which Procopius commanded. Yet, while Julian assented on this occasion to the opinion of his officers, he was far from being pacifically disposed; for he treated with contempt the humble application of the Persian monarch for an adjustment of all disputes, and even rejected an offer of ample territorial cessions<sup>32</sup>. His sanguine presumption prompted him to emulate the glory of Alexander, and to expect a complete triumph over a powerful enemy. He imprudently resolved to march into the interior parts of the country, and risque a general engagement. Flattered in his hopes by the crafty suggestions of a Persian, who, pretending to be an injured deserter, expatiated on the multiplied chances of victory, and offered friendly guidance and zealous aid, the rash prince blindly advanced to his ruin. He gave orders for the destruction of his fleet<sup>33</sup>, as if it would no longer be necessary. He perhaps thought, that it would be good policy to prevent the vessels from falling into the hands of the enemy,—that the thousands who were occupied in securing and navigating them would be more usefully employed in reinforcing the legions,—or that the augmented difficulties of an eventual retreat would stimulate his troops to fight with more determined courage. The soldiers could not refrain from murmuring at this act of indiscretion; and Julian, attentive to their wishes, or sensible of his error, countermanded the order, when it had almost entirely been carried into effect<sup>34</sup>.

The Romans, in their progress, were reduced to great difficulties, in point of subsistence, by the precautions of their adversaries, who had set fire to the standing corn, and removed the cattle. It therefore became expedient

<sup>32</sup> Socrat. lib. iii. cap. 18.

<sup>33</sup> Ammian. lib. xxiv. sect. 25.—Theodor. iii. 20.

<sup>34</sup> Out of 1100 vessels, beside ships of war, only 22 were saved, according to Zosimus.

to discontinue their advance into Persia or Media, and retreat toward the province of Corduene. They had scarcely changed their route, when a considerable force appeared, hastening to attack them. Partial assaults ensued, which were bravely repelled; but the utmost valor of the legionaries could not effectually intimidate the enemy, or prevent that renewal of attack which was invited by the view of a retiring army. In one of these conflicts, the emperor, who at the first alarm had neglected to put on his breast-plate, was drawn by the fervor of his courage into the midst of the contending throng, and pierced in the side by a javelin, at a time when victory was inclining to his arms. The wound proved mortal. The patient prince met the approaches of death with philosophic fortitude, and died without a groan<sup>35</sup>.

June 26.

The apostasy and the pagan zeal of this prince have exposed him to severe reproaches from Christian writers; and, indeed, his conduct, in following an imperfect and absurd system, which his good sense ought to have despised, cannot be justly defended. His superstitious observance of this system, particularly in point of animal sacrifice, subjected him to the ridicule even of the votaries of the same religion. His government, after his acquisition of the imperial dignity, was less just, correct, honorable, or enlightened, than the course which he had previously pursued in Gaul: yet he continued to avoid those excesses of rapine and murder into which many of his predecessors had wantonly and daringly rushed; and his private virtues claim our commendation; for he was temperate, chaste, liberal amidst personal self-denial, and generally humane.

35 Ammian. lib. xxv. sect. 11.



## LETTER XXII.

*Sequel of the ROMAN and GRECIAN History, to the Invasion of Europe by the HUNS.*

A. D. 362. THE fall of Julian, while it inspired the Christians with joy, spread dejection among the friends of paganism, who lamented the inattention of that prince to the appointment of a colleague and successor of his own religion. In the military choice of a new emperor, Sallust was the first object of regard : but he declined the offered dignity, alleging that he was in a great measure incapacitated for the arduous employment by age and indisposition. The name of Jovian was then mentioned ; and, without any pre-eminence of merit, he was chosen emperor by the assembled officers. He was a tribune, and was styled the first of the domestics. His father Varonian was a distinguished warrior, but had recently retired from the service<sup>1</sup>.

Sapor received early information, respecting the character of the new prince, from a traitorous standard-bearer. This subaltern, being at variance with the father and son, passed over to the Persian camp, and represented Jovian as a weak man, who might easily be intimidated into a dishonorable peace. Animated with hope, the king renewed his orders for a vigorous pursuit ; and the rear of the retiring army seemed to be in danger of destruction ; but the Romans fought with such vigor, that they repelled the insulting foe. The camp was subsequently attacked, and was on the point of being completely forced. After having withstood a succession of assaults, the imperial troops approached the Tigris, and demanded permission to at-

tempt a passage. Jovian remonstrated against the hazardous experiment, alleging that the river was already swollen by the influence of the dog-star, and that the banks were guarded by the enemy : but, on a repetition of the demand, he allowed a party of Gauls to swim over. They performed the task with little difficulty, and surprised a hostile post. It was then resolved that a temporary bridge should be constructed ; but the force of the stream baffled every attempt of that kind ; and the disappointment was aggravated by the approach of famine<sup>2</sup>.

However distressed, the Romans would not condescend to sue for peace. The proposal of a treaty came from their adversaries, who lamented the severe loss which they had sustained in the late conflicts, and dreaded the effect of Roman desperation. A pacification was concluded for thirty years ; and it was agreed, that five provinces should be restored to the Persians, beside some towns and fortresses in Mesopotamia ; and that all authority in Armenia should be relinquished by the Romans<sup>3</sup>. Jovian was blamed by the high spirit of his subjects for submitting to these disgraceful conditions, which, they affirmed, were unprecedented in the annals of Rome. But he eagerly wished to secure an escape ; for he was deficient in that fortitude which despised danger, and was apprehensive of the competition of Procopius, who, being at the head of the legions in Mesopotamia, might be tempted to offer himself as a candidate for the sovereignty. He did not even insist upon the grant or sale of provisions to his famished troops.

In preparing to pass the river, the Romans were harassed by bands of Arabs, at whose hostilities the Persians connived ; and the passage was not effected without a considerable loss of lives in the stream. The few boats which

<sup>2</sup> Ammian. lib. xxv. sect. 18—22.

<sup>3</sup> Zosim. lib. iii. sect. 39.—Ammian. xxv. 23.—Socrat. iii. 19.—Eutrop.

remained served to transport the emperor, his officers, and many of the legionaries, by frequently going and returning; while others trusted to the frail contrivance of hurdles, or of skins inflated with air. After a tedious march, during which a seasonable supply of provisions relieved the urgency of want, the army reached the walls of Nisibis, but declined an entrance into that town, because it was to be yielded to the Persians by the treaty. The inhabitants, who had the alternative of retiring, or of being enslaved by their new masters, earnestly entreated the emperor not to abandon them to either fate. They declared their ability of defending the town against all assaults, and therefore urged him to release them from the inglorious stipulation. As he replied that he was bound in honor to execute every part of the agreement, the citizens reluctantly quitted their habitations, and retired to other towns, chiefly to Amida<sup>4</sup>.

The convention, which was fully carried into effect by the scrupulosity or by the timidity of Jovian, has been deemed, both by ancient and modern historians, a striking proof of the declension of Roman spirit and vigor. Yet it was more prudent to give up some distant provinces, than to risque the ruin of a great army; for the empire was too large and unwieldy, and might easily bear an inconsiderable defalcation; and, as the treaty had been concluded by an officer whom the troops acknowledged as their sovereign, their honor was concerned in it's support. Whether the senate and the people were bound to adhere to it, is another question. They might have alleged, that an officer, chosen emperor by the army alone, was not a lawful prince, and that his acts might be invalidated without the imputation of perfidy: but they were not induced to annul either the appointment or the convention.

To secure that power which military favor had assigned

<sup>4</sup> Ammian. lib. xxv. sect. 25, et seq.—Zosim. lib. iii. sect. 41.



to him, Jovian sent trusty messengers to Europe, with particular instructions to Lucilian (whose daughter he had espoused), and to Malarich, a respectable officer. The former was requested to hasten to Milan, and promote with zeal the submission of the people to his son-in-law; while the latter was desired to supersede Jovinus, who exercised military command in Gaul. Malarich declined the trust; and Lucilian lost his life in a mutiny; but Valentinian, a military tribune, who had accompanied him from Asia, escaped without injury, and was reserved for high fortune. Jovinus, instead of opposing the pretensions of the new emperor, persuaded the legions of Gaul to approve the election, and sent a deputation with a promise of loyal support. No prospect, indeed, appeared of serious resistance to his authority.

Jovian still remained in Asia, and did not live to re-visit Europe. He either died of indigestion, or was <sup>Feb. 17,</sup> suffocated in a damp chamber by the fumes of <sup>363,</sup> charcoal<sup>5</sup>. He was distinguished by his gigantic stature, with which, however, his courage did not fully correspond. He was prone to every sensual gratification, and fond of mirth and jocularities; but he had, at the same time, a taste for literature, a tincture of humanity, and great zeal for the Christian religion.

As the emperor died in Bithynia, a council was convoked in the capital of that province for the supply of the vacant throne. It was composed both of civil and military officers, by whom Sallust was re-invited to the sovereignty, which he again modestly declined. The friends of Valentinian then proposed his appointment, to which all assented. He had attended the European deputies to Asia, without the smallest expectation of so fortunate a vacancy. His father was originally in a low station, but had risen to high command; and his reputation paved the

<sup>5</sup> Sozomen. lib. vi. cap. 6.—Ammian.

way for the advancement of the son. In a general assembly of the soldiers, the nomination was readily confirmed; but, when he was saluted emperor, a wish was so loudly expressed for the choice of a colleague, that a mutiny would have been apprehended, by a timid prince, as the consequence of a refusal. The spirit of Valentinian, however, precluded the sensations of fear: he was inspired with an exalted idea of his new dignity, and resolved to act as the uncontrolled master of the empire. Addressing the soldiers with a firmness of tone which over-awed them into submission, he admitted that it might be expedient for the Roman world to have two emperors: but, as they had already advanced him to the chief power, it was his business, not that of his electors, to provide for it's due exercise. Not a murmur arose among them,—such was the effect of his cool and authoritative demeanor<sup>6</sup>.

After having revolved in his mind the subject of imperial association, he made choice of a near relative for his colleague. If the nomination had been left to the army, a formidable rival might perhaps have been chosen: but the person whom he named for a participation of authority, was his younger brother, from whom he expected and obtained a full subserviency. He reserved to himself the western division of the empire, and assigned to Valens the government of the eastern portion.

Procopius, whose supposed ambition had excited the jealousy of the late emperor, had exchanged the fatigues of the camp for a rural life. His repose was now disturbed by the emissaries of despotism. A party of soldiers received an order to apprehend him, as a disaffected subject; but he escaped to the Tauric peninsula, and remained for some months in disconsolate anxiety. Weary of exile, and regardless of the consequences of a discovery, he emerged from his retreat, and appeared at Constanti-

<sup>6</sup> Ammian. lib. xxvi. sect. 2, 5, 6.—Theodor. lib. iv. cap. 5.

nople in the absence of Valens, who, under the apprehension of a Persian war, had marched toward the Syrian province. A. D. 364. Observing the prevalence of discontent among the people, who were particularly disgusted at the rapacity and cruelty of Petronius, the emperor's father-in-law, he formed an association with the opulent eunuch Eugenius, who had been dismissed from the court; and the intrigues of these confederates soon seduced two cohorts into a revolt<sup>7</sup>.

The rebellious party daily gained strength; and Procopius, asserting his claim as the relative of Julian, was declared emperor by the populace. Bodies of soldiers, at different stations, were tempted, by presents or by promises, to offer their service to the usurper, whose cause assumed so favorable an aspect, that Valens almost despaired of the retention of his power, and would have shaken off the burthen of government, if his friends had not warmly remonstrated against such an abject dereliction. A detachment of troops, supposed to be loyal, meeting Procopius and his army on the banks of the Sangarius, consented to enlist under his standard; and one of his officers, besieged in Nice, made so vigorous a sally, that the siege was immediately raised. This success seemed to afford an opportunity of intercepting Valens, who, having in vain attempted the reduction of Chalcedon, was retiring in confusion: but, being apprised of the intended movement, he escaped by the aid of guides who were well acquainted with the country. The result was the submission of the whole province of Bithynia to Procopius<sup>8</sup>.

Valentinian, being engaged in the defence of Gaul against a barbarian host, turned a deaf ear to the applications of his brother for military aid: but Arbetio, and other able officers who adhered to Valens, assured the discou-

<sup>7</sup> Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 4, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ammian. lib. xxvi. sect. 16, 21, 22.



raged prince, that his own power and resources were adequate to the defence and preservation of his dominions. Ashamed of his pusillanimity, the eastern emperor resolved to risque a general engagement. At Thyatira; an

A. D. 365. opportunity of conflict occurred, which at first favored the usurper; but the desertion of Gomar-rius, one of his chief officers, with a considerable part of the army, gave the victory to the imperialists. In the subsequent battle of Nacolia, similar treachery was manifested; and the effect was ruinous to the leader of the revolt, who, in an attempt to escape, was bound by two of his companions, and given up to the offended prince. He was instantly decapitated<sup>9</sup>; and his two betrayers were also put to death. Marcellus, by whom his interest had been zealously supported, and who had gratified both parties by commanding the death of Serenianus, an unprincipled and inhuman counsellor of Valens, affected for a time the imperial dignity, under the protection of a small force, which he hoped to augment by the assistance of the Goths: but he was suddenly seized by some loyal legionaries, and capitally punished.

The cruelty of the victor was now exercised, not only against those who had abetted the revolt, but against many innocent individuals, who were connected with the insurgents by consanguinity, or were considered as their friends before the rebellion was organised<sup>10</sup>. Even the adherents of the government reprobated the barbarity of Valens and his ministers, who added insult to outrage, and amused themselves by the wanton infliction of torture.

Valentinian rather encouraged than checked the inhumanity of his brother; and, if any revolt had occurred in the West, his revenge would have been equally severe;

<sup>9</sup> Ammian. lib. xxvi. sect. 27. Socrates and Sozomen say, that he was fastened to the branches of two trees, forcibly bent together; which, being suffered to regain their former position, dismembered him. From these writers, Abul-faraj has borrowed the idle story.

<sup>10</sup> Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 8.

for clemency or compassion rarely influenced the conduct of either prince. Rapine and murder stalked in the train of both despots; and no man's life was safe, or property secure, under their tyrannical sway<sup>11</sup>. While such was the unhappy state of the people whom they governed, it was of little use that "both princes retained, in the purple, (as a modern historian<sup>12</sup> affirms,) the chaste and temperate simplicity which had adorned their private lives," or that they "reformed *many*<sup>13</sup> of the abuses of the times of Constantius."

The Allemanni, by their invasion of Gaul, furnished the western emperor with an opportunity (if he had been willing to embrace it) of displaying his courage and exercising his military talents. Those barbarians were disgusted at the trifling value of the presents which they had received on the elevation of Valentinian: and, being eagerly desirous of ample spoils, they rushed into Gaul, and commenced desultory hostilities. The emperor did not personally take the field, but left the task of repression and chastisement to Dagalaiphus, who could not, however, with all his expedition, overtake the retiring marauders. A much greater force subsequently passed the Rhine, and attacked the provincials and their legionary protectors, who were defeated with disgrace. The Batavian auxiliaries having misbehaved on this occasion, Valentinian resolved, not to decimate them, but to stigmatise them in the face of the army, and condemn them to a life of degradation. He ordered, that they should be disarmed, and sold as slaves: but they so humbly and earnestly implored his indulgence, that he consented to try their valor in another engagement. Two divisions of the barbarian host were soon after surprised and routed by Jovinus; and the main body, being defeated in an obstinate conflict, in

11 Ammian. in variis locis.—Zosim.

12 Gibbon.

13 The author ought to have qualified this comprehensive expression.

which the Batavians retrieved their reputation, suffered a very severe loss. The victorious general was rewarded with the consulate for that success which seemed to have put an end to the war<sup>14</sup>.

The two brothers now lavished mutual congratulations; for the triumph of Jovinus was nearly coincident, in point of time, with the ruin of Procopius. But Valens had not fully restored peace to his empire, the Goths (whom the rebels had instigated to action) being in arms against him. He marched to the vicinity of the Danube; crossed the river without finding an occasion of conflict; and <sup>366</sup> passed the summer in fruitless movements. Another year elapsed without serious collision. Athanaric, the Visi-Gothic prince, at length met the emperor, by whom he was defeated with great loss. The dread of famine prompting him to wish for peace, he sent deputies to open a negotiation; and a treaty was concluded, not

<sup>368</sup> altogether favorable to the solicitors, who were restricted in their trade, and whose allowances were diminished<sup>15</sup>.

During this war, the Allemanni renewed their hostilities against the subjects of Valentinian. Their presumption roused the indignation of the emperor, who, with his son and colleague Gratian, entered Germany, denouncing vengeance against the barbarians. Having ravaged their country, he stormed their camp; and, while a part of his army harassed them on one side, the rest endeavoured to cut off their retreat; but this service was not so effectually performed, as to prevent the escape of a considerable number into the woods<sup>16</sup>. Their future incursions were prudently checked by the erection of a multiplicity of forts along the banks of the Rhine.

The disordered state of Britain also claimed the atten-

<sup>14</sup> Ammian. lib. xxvii. sect. 11; xxvii. 1—3.—Zosim.

<sup>15</sup> Themist. Orat. x.—Ammian. lib. xxvii. cap. 10, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Ammian. lib. xxvii. sect. 23, 24.



tion of Valentinian. The inhabitants of the northern division of that island were still hostile to the provincials, whose property they coveted, and whom they hated for their subserviency to the Romans. Repeated applications for vigorous aid induced the emperor to select a man of distinguished merit for the government and defence of South-Britain. Theodosius was sent from Gaul to oppose all the enemies of the feeble provincials; for they were not only harassed by the northern islanders, but by the Franks and Saxons. He found the German invaders near London, and immediately attacked and dispersed them, enforcing a dereliction of all the property which they had taken from the Britons. He afterward marched against the Picts and Scots, and prevailed over them in several conflicts. Having repaired the rampart of Antoninus, he restored it to its former importance, as a boundary between the barbarians and the British subjects of Rome. His civil government reflected honor upon his character. He combined dignity with moderation, and spirit with humanity; and his conduct not only commanded the respect of the people, but secured their affection.

While the government of Valentinian was thus externally strengthened by war, he exercised a rigorous sway at home. He affected a regard for justice; but the ferocity and severity of his character more frequently led him into a contrary course. That he enacted some equitable laws, cannot be denied. It also appears, that he was a friend to religious toleration; that he extended the advantages of education; provided, by the official establishment of physicians, for the preservation of the health of his people; and gave some encouragement to that industry which tended to furnish them with the comforts of life. But his cruelty was rarely intermitted; and, to real or pretended offences, he added one ground of accusation, which no just or humane prince would for a moment have countenanced or entertained. He suffered charges of in-

cantation or magic to be adduced; and, upon this absurd

A. D. allegation, a great number of his subjects were  
369. hurried by his mandate from the world, while others were doomed to exile, and ruined by confiscation.

A belief in sorcery was one of the vulgar errors of the time. It was supposed, that artful individuals might establish a correspondence with evil spirits, obtain by such consultation a knowledge of future events, and injure others in their minds and persons by malignant spells, superstitious ceremonies, and magical preparations and contrivances. Accusations of this kind were checked by Valentinian at the beginning of his reign; but he afterward sanctioned and encouraged them. Maximin, one of the most depraved creatures of the court, gave a loose in this respect to the spirit of calumny at Rome, and rendered it subservient to the purposes of rapine and cruelty. Ursicinus kept pace with this officer in the career of injustice, and gratified the emperor by the ruin of distinguished citizens and the depression of noble families<sup>17</sup>.

A similar persecution raged at Antioch, but not at the same time<sup>18</sup>. A patrician named Hilarius, having consulted a soothsayer with regard to the next occupant of the throne, was answered by a mechanical contrivance, which pointed out *Theod* as the incipient part of the name of that prince who should succeed Valens. He and his friends referred this supposed prediction to Theodorus, an imperial notary, the descendant of an illustrious family in Gaul, a young man of acknowledged respectability. The flattering prospect, instead of exciting ridicule, was hailed (it is said) by the ambitious youth<sup>19</sup>, who did not reflect upon the danger of indulging such hopes, unless they were con-

<sup>17</sup> Ammian. lib. xxviii. sect. 3—10.

<sup>18</sup> Chiefly in the year 373.

<sup>19</sup> Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 14.—Ammian. xxix. 8.—Aurel. Vict.—Sozomen, however, merely says, that the philosophers applied the conjecture to Theodorus, without giving the smallest hint of his admission of that hope which, he must have known, would be construed into treason by the vindictive jealousy of either of the imperial brothers.

fined to his own breast. The suspicious vigilance of the government soon obtained information of his imprudence. He was apprehended, examined, tortured, and put to death. Many others, for the same offence, or for magical practices unconnected with treason, were murdered by the tyranny of Valens. The philosophers Maximus and Simonides were among these victims; and, indeed, the persecution fell with peculiar weight upon men of that description<sup>20</sup>. At the same time with Simonides, many were accused; all of whom, without distinction, the emperor ordered to be stabbed or beheaded, while the philosopher, whose refusal of confession exasperated the savage prince, was consigned to the devouring flames. He smiled at the injustice of his arbitrary tormentor, and bore his fate with Stoical apathy<sup>21</sup>.

Under these emperors, even peace was sanguinary; and the miseries of war were occasionally added. If the military reputation of Valentinian did not deter invaders, the less warlike character of Valens was not likely to overawe them. Yet the Goths, after their treaty with the eastern prince, preserved peace with him for six years. During that interval, his brother was obliged to act (but not personally) against the Saxons and other adversaries. Not only the coasts of his empire were harassed by Frank and Saxon adventurers; but they even passed into the inland districts in boats, which were not too large to be carried in waggons from one river to a distant stream. Some of their invasions were attended with success in point of depredation, and followed by a safe retreat: but, when a considerable body had made some progress in Gaul, Severus met the intruders with a superior force, and compelled them to resign their spoils, and to deliver up many of their young companions for legionary enlistment. He outwardly consented to the secure departure of the rest:

<sup>20</sup> Sozomen lib. vi. cap. 35.—Zosim

<sup>21</sup> *Immobilis conflagravit*, are the expressive and terrific words of Ammianus.



yet, when they were retiring, an ambushed *corps* treacherously attacked them: With such fury did they resist this unexpected assault, that many of the Romans fell; and the whole party would probably have been cut off, if a body of horse had not arrived to sustain the yielding legionaries. The Saxons were then so severely pressed, that none of them escaped death or captivity<sup>22</sup>.

To divert the Allemanni from a renewal of war, or to chastise them for being still hostile to the Gallic provincials, Valentinian made overtures for an alliance with the Burgundians (another German nation), whom he promised to join on their approach to the Rhine. They appeared in great force; but, as he neither met them, nor gratified their chieftains with the presents which they expected, they retired in disgust, venting their sanguinary indignation upon the Allemanni who had fallen into their hands.

While the troops of the latter nation were wandering under the apprehension of Burgundian hostilities, Theodosius, who had been recalled from his British government, slew many of them, and captured a much greater number.

The prisoners were sent to colonise the banks of the Po. The gallant officer, who had restored safety and tranquillity to South-Britain, was afterward employed in the re-establishment of the imperial authority in Africa. The rapacity and tyranny of Romanus had long harassed the provincials, whom, unless they gratified his avarice, he would not even defend against barbarian hostilities. All complaints of his misconduct were baffled by his influence in the imperial cabinet: and some of his accusers were put to death for their interference in behalf of their countrymen. This injustice necessarily aggravated the general discontent; of which Firmus, a Mauritanian prince, at length resolved to take advantage. He had killed his brother in a quarrel; and, being menaced by the governor

<sup>22</sup> Ammian. lib. xxviii. sect. 27, 28.—Oros. lib. vii.

with the vengeance of the law, he erected the standard of revolt. He was soon at the head of a numerous army of provincials, of Mauritians and Numidians. The town of Cesarea was pillaged and burned by his partisans, who, where-ever they met with resistance, furiously ravaged the country. Theodosius, being sent against the revolt, effectually exerted his courage and address. While he pretended to listen to the overtures of Firmus, who wished to disarm him by negotiation, he did not neglect the prosecution of hostilities. He mingled policy with war, and quickly convinced the insurgents that they had an active and able adversary. He routed them in two battles, and gave them so little respite, that their leader sent some Christian ecclesiastics to implore mercy, and to offer hostages. A mild answer being given, he repaired to the tent of Theodosius, made humble apologies, produced supplies for the imperial troops, and left some of his relatives to answer for a continuance of his submission; but it was suspected that he was insincere, and only wished to gain time for an augmentation of his force. Having captured a multitude of his accomplices, the Romans still harassed the rebels with indefatigable diligence. As it appeared that many of the prisoners had lately belonged to the legions, Theodosius gave them up to the summary justice of his camp; and, while some were punished with mutilation, others were put to death. A succession of hostilities at length reduced Firmus to the necessity of seeking refuge among the Isafenses, whose king, with a numerous army, encountered the small but well-disciplined force of Theodosius. The conflict, which began with the dawn, was protracted to the close of day. Firmus, presenting himself before the legionaries, exhorted them to submit to his authority, and secure themselves from ruin by the surrender of their general, whose inhuman severity he loudly condemned. This appeal roused the indignation of the majority to a more vigorous

resistance, while it relaxed the zeal of others; some of whom, for ceasing to oppose the rebels, were burned alive by the rigor of Theodosius. In another collision of arms, the victory so clearly devolved to the Romans, that the barbarian prince consented to withdraw his protection from Firmus, who, being thus precluded from an escape, suspended himself to a beam in his chamber, to avoid the insults and tortures which he dreaded from the arrogance and fury of Roman vengeance. A submission of his followers ensued; and the suppression of a dangerous revolt afforded leisure to Theodosius for a reform of abuses in the provincial administration<sup>23</sup>.

In the mean time, the eastern emperor was engaged in a war with the Persians. Sapor, the veteran potentate, was still active and ambitious; and, as the Romans were bound by treaty to leave the Armenians at liberty, he resolved to reduce their kingdom completely under his yoke. He invaded the country with a numerous army, persuaded a part of the nation to enter into his views, and intimidated the rest by a show of hostility. Having inveigled the king into his power, he treacherously put him to death, and subjected Armenia to the forms of a provincial government. Over Iberia, which was under Roman influence, he appointed a dependent king. Valens, resenting these acts of power, interfered in support of the partisans of Rome in the two countries; but instructed his officers to avoid aggressive hostilities. Para, the fugitive son of the murdered prince, had courted the emperor's protection, and returned to Armenia, on the invitation even of the two governors who ostensibly acted for Sapor. The Persians threatened the people with vengeance for receiving him; and the country would have been again subdued, if Arintheus, the imperial general, had not displayed a firmness of countenance, calculated to check



the fury of the invaders. Trajan, who assumed the command of an augmented force, slowly retired as the Persians advanced; but, being drawn into a battle by their eagerness, he chastised them by a defeat. An armistice was then concluded; and, while it subsisted, Parth, whose conduct had excited the suspicion of Valens, as if he leaned more to the Persian than to the Roman interest, was invited to an entertainment by Trajan, and murdered by the order of an officer whom he considered as his friend. Sapor complained of this act of treachery, and of the faithless proceedings of the Romans; and a negotiation ensued, which continued for some years to amuse the two courts, not terminating in a regular pacification before the death of Sapor. The disputed realms were then left in a predicament which could neither be called a state of complete independence, nor of entire subserviency to the Romans or the Persians<sup>24</sup>.

Valentinian, who had no concern in his brother's Asiatic contests, involved himself in hostilities with the Quadi. The encroaching prince, in his eager desire of multiplying military stations near his frontiers, ordered a fort to be erected within the territories of that unconquered nation;—an insult which excited and justified loud complaints. Equitius, who commanded in Illyria, promised that due regard should be paid to these representations; but Maximin, whose tyranny at Rome had so far recommended him to the favor of his master, that he had been appointed to the government of Gaul, reprehended that timidity which had desisted from the work, and procured the imperial consent to its being prosecuted by his son Marcellinus. The king of the Quadi, having temperately remonstrated against the intended encroachment, was invited to an entertainment, and treacherously assassinated. Enraged at this atrocious act, the Quadi, in company with the Sarma-

tians, crossed the Danube, burned the villages, massacred many of the inhabitants, and carried off others into slavery. They in vain attempted the reduction of Sirmium; but, in a separate attack of two legions, they displayed such vigor as nearly destroyed those detachments. In Moesia, the barbarians were less successful; for Theodosius (son of that general who triumphed over Firmus), meeting a body of Sarmatian marauders, slew a great number, and compelled the rest to sue for peace<sup>25</sup>.

When Valentinian, by a treaty of alliance, had secured the forbearance of the Allemanni, he resolved to chastise the Quadi for their incursions, without considering the provocation which they had received. A sovereign who boasted of his regard for justice, avoided all inquiry into the murder of the German prince, although the honor of Rome was deeply interested in the decision. He showed his contempt both of justice and equity, in another striking instance. He found that Probus had shamefully injured and oppressed the Illyrian provincials; and yet he did not stigmatise that unprincipled officer, who deserved the severest punishment. Proceeding into the territories of the Quadi, he committed horrible devastations, and received so little molestation from the enemy, that he did not sustain the smallest loss<sup>26</sup>. Not satisfied with the vengeance which he had taken, he hoped to renew his hostilities in the ensuing year, to the utter ruin of the Quadi. He did not foresee that death would soon check his sanguinary career, and free the Roman world from one of the unfeeling tyrants by whom it was miserably oppressed.

The emperor's irritability occasioned or hastened his death. When the deputies sent by the Quadi had apologised for their invasion, which, they said, was the offence of a few, not an act authorised by their rulers, he was so

<sup>25</sup> Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 16.—Ammian. xxix. 35—38.

<sup>26</sup> Ammian. lib. xxx. sect. 20.

far from being softened by their apparent humility, that he broke out into fierce invectives against the whole nation. Suddenly his voice failed; and, having burst a blood-vessel in the excess of his choleric emotion, he soon expired<sup>27</sup>. He exhibited proofs of talent and policy; but he was a brutal soldier, and an unfeeling<sup>374</sup> tyrant, rather than a just, magnanimous, or enlightened prince.

The absence of Gratian, to whom, as the acknowledged colleague of his father, the whole succession belonged, furnished ambitious ministers with an opportunity of elevating to the throne a very young prince, in whose name they hoped to govern without control. Valentinian, son of the deceased prince by his second wife, was presented to the army, and declared emperor. Gratian was displeased at the presumption of his brother's friends; but his moderation inclined him to acquiesce in the election; and he transferred to his new associate the government of Italy, Illyria, and the African provinces; assuming, however, the occasional privilege of dictating to the chief administrators of the territories granted to the infant prince.

The elder Valentinian had scarcely expired, when his brother's portion of the empire was menaced with a new and formidable invasion. An army of barbarians, whose figure seemed scarcely human, poured into the Gothic settlements, and diffused extreme terror where-ever they appeared: but a view of their progress may properly be reserved for another epistle.

27 Ammian. lib. xxx. sect. 22, 23.—Zosim.—Aur. Vict.



## LETTER XXIII.

*Continuation of the History of every Branch of the Empire, to the Death of GRATIAN.*

IF, even in the present enlightened age, a great part of the world be in a state to which the name of civilisation is inapplicable, it cannot be an object of surprise, that, in the flourishing days of the Roman empire, many barbarous nations should have hovered near it's frontiers. Some of these have already been mentioned; but my notice is now called to a remarkable and peculiar race, disgusting in form and features, and repulsively horrid in manners.

The Huns originally inhabited that part of Asia which is now comprehended within the extensive region of eastern Tartary. Their warlike spirit prompted them, at an early period, to attack the neighbouring communities. With the Chinese they had frequent wars; and it is said, that they extended their terrific influence to the northern ocean: but this, probably, is an incorrect assertion, the fruit of exaggerative fancy. About two centuries before the Christian era, the energy of their arms inflicted upon the Chinese the disgrace of tributary submission; but the stigma was at length removed, and even exchanged for dependence and homage on the part of the chief Hunnic prince. Intestine commotions concurred with foreign hostilities to weaken the power of the barbarians; and the hordes that were not so completely vanquished as to be incorporated with their adversaries, resolved to march to the westward in quest of adventures and with views of conquest. A considerable number reached the country between the Jaxartes and the Oxus, and gradually established a respectable monarchy. Another multitude advanced to the Volga, and contended for power and terri-

tory with the Alans, who were equally brave, and more civilised. Arriving at the Tanais after a temporary colonisation of the intervening districts, the Huns subdued the Alans, and admitted to an union all who were willing to join them. Being still inclined to advance, they crossed the Borysthenes, proceeded to the Tyras, and alarmed the Goths in their Dacian settlements<sup>1</sup>.

The aspect and manners of these fierce intruders excited disgust and terror. A broad ill-shaped face, a flat nose, black eyes so small as to seem like mere points, dark hair and complexion, and a squat figure, distinguished these unwelcome intruders; and their gestures were as awkward and ungraceful, as their forms were hideous. They had no change of dress, but continued to wear the same garment of linen or leather, until it became a mass of rags, impregnated with dirt. Hats or caps of kid-skin were in use among them; and shoes were worn, so ill-fitted to their feet, as to obstruct their movements. They were so fond of horses, that they frequently passed whole days and nights, upon the backs of those animals, even sleeping in that position<sup>2</sup>. Instead of houses or huts, they had large waggons, in which whole families might be said to reside: in these vehicles the women manufactured their clothing, and performed the various duties of social life. Agriculture, if not unknown, was unpractised by their tribes. They fed upon wild plants and roots; and to that coarse fare they added the flesh of their cattle or the beasts of the field, either entirely raw, or merely warmed by friction. They were naturally strong; and the mode in which they were bred so hardened their constitutions, that they could endure all hardships and privations with exemplary fortitude. With regard to their morals, they

<sup>1</sup> Histoire des Huns, par M. de Guignes.

<sup>2</sup> Ammianus says, that they were in a manner fixed to their horses, *equis prope adfixi*. Their appearance, in this respect, probably reminded the Romans of the fable of the Centaur.

had no strict sense of honour, and little knowledge of the distinctions of right and wrong. In their manners they were rough; fickle in their temper; inscible, but soon appeased. In point of government, their free spirit disdained submission to despotism; but they allowed to their chief prince a sufficiency of power to render him respectable.

Such were the barbarian warriors who appeared before the terrified Goths. They first approached the station of Ermenric, who, having weakened his authority by tyrannic acts, and being wounded by the revenge of some of his injured subjects, did not act with his usual vigor. Confounded at the difficulties and dangers in which he was involved, he shortened his life by violence. Withimer, who succeeded him as king of the Ostro-Goths, took the field against the invaders; but he was unable to withstand their fury, and fell in the heat of action. The Visi-Goths, under Athanaric, advanced to the banks of the Danastus, and were also routed by the Huns and the Alans; but their prince, not wholly discouraged, resolved to form a long line of entrenchments, in the hope of checking the career of the enemy. His people, however, were so intimidated by the active and ferocious valor of the Huns, that they did not think themselves safe while they remained on the northern side of the Danube. The majority, therefore, approached the banks with their wives and children; and deputies were sent to the emperor Valens, requesting an asylum in Moesia or in Thrace for a harassed nation, whose gratitude, it was said, would be evinced by loyal submission and by faithful service.

A wise prince, acquainted with the character and former conduct of the Goths, would have opposed the admission of such a multitude of turbulent foreigners among the subjects of a declining empire; while a benevolent

3 Ammian. lib. xxxi. sect. 2, 3, 4.

4 Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 20.—Ammian. xxxi. 8, 9.—Soerat. iv. 28.



monarch would have acceded to the request from motives of philanthropy and compassion. Valens was neither wise nor humane. He was not so politic as to refuse his consent; and, in acquiescing, he was not guided by the impulse of generosity or benevolence. He credulously imagined that the Goths would be equally submissive with his present subjects: he reflected on the pecuniary profit which he might derive from a commutation of the military service of the provincials; and, without sufficiently balancing the danger against the precarious advantage, he gave a compliant answer to the Gothic envoys: but he demanded a previous surrender of the arms of their countrymen, and also of their male children. It is supposed, that the number of Goths, of both sexes, thus admitted into Moesia, nearly amounted to a million. Many, who attempted to pass the river before permission was obtained, were slain by the indignant legionaries; and not a few were drowned in the rapid stream, while the vessels were regularly employed in the transportation. The stipulation of disarming was in a great measure eluded by the offer of females to the wanton passions of the superintending officers, or by other bribes<sup>5</sup>.

The new colonists were soon at variance with Lupicinus, governor of the province, and Maximus, A. D. 376. the military commander. These rapacious officers withheld due supplies of provision, and demanded an extravagant price, in money or by barter, for that portion which they condescended to allow; and, when they found discontent spreading among the strangers in consequence of this treatment, they hoped, by dispersing them in various districts, to obviate the danger of a revolt.

In the mean time, the Ostro-Goths, who had solicited without effect the favor of admission, found an opportunity of passing over the aquatic boundary, when the banks were unguarded. Fritigern, who exercised the chief sway

5 Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 20.—Ammian. xxxi. 10, 11. & Jornand. cap. 25.

over the Visi-Gothic colony, entered into a close concert with Alatheus, who headed the new body of emigrants in the name of a minor prince. Affecting a readiness to occupy any station which the governor might point out, he advanced with a numerous train to Marcianopolis. Being invited to a banquet by Lupicinus, he did not decline the honor. During the entertainment, the Goths were obliged to remain at some distance from the walls, notwithstanding their repeated request to be admitted to a participation of that abundance which prevailed in the city. A warm altercation arose between the colonists and the garrison: a soldier at length commenced a personal assault; and the extension of the quarrel led to the death of some of the legionaries. The governor, enraged at this intelligence, ordered an attack upon the guard that had escorted Frigern into the town. That general, apprehending that he himself might be the next victim, coolly stated the expediency of his immediate endeavours to allay the tumult, and, hastening with his chief associates, unopposed, through the town, joined his excluded countrymen. Fresh parties of Goths flocked from various stations; and a considerable force encountered Lupicinus. Many of the barbarians were very imperfectly armed; but valor supplied the deficiency; and the death of the greater part of the legionaries furnished their opponents with an abundance of weapons for another engagement. The vanquished governor fled in consternation; and Mœsia and Thrace were left to the mercy of an exasperated foe.

The revolt of the Goths, and their success in the late conflict, induced Valens to command the retreat of a multitude of their countrymen, who had been, long before, admitted into Thrace. He apprehended that they would join the revolted, and therefore ordered them to

transfer their station to the Asiatic shore of the Hellespont. They requested a short delay and a supply of subsistence : but the governor of Adrianople was so far from complying with their wishes, that he threatened them with hostilities for their contumacy. As they did not commence their departure, they were assaulted by the inhabitants, whom, however, they repelled with ease ; and, thus provoked, they formed a junction with Fritigern. Having besieged the city without effect, they wandered over the province, plundered the villages, and massacred many of the subjects of Valens.

The annunciation of the Gothic progress was received by the emperor without that terror which his people expected that he would have felt. He declared that he would take the personal command of the legions, and advance without delay against the ferocious enemy : and, until his arrival in the camp, he ordered Profuturus and Trajan to supply his place. These officers have been represented as deficient in the qualifications requisite for the command of an army : but they seem to have acted with spirit. They were joined by Ricomer with some Gallic cohorts ; and, having brought the foe to action, they contended from morning to the close of day. Their left wing gave way to a great superiority of number ; and the rest of their army did not so far prevail, as to obtain a signal advantage. Night separated the combatants, after a great loss had been sustained by both parties. The joint commanders endeavoured to subdue the survivors by famine. The chief articles of sustenance were stored within towns, which the barbarians, unskilled in sieges, could not easily reduce : but, when they had suffered the Romans to confine them for a time to a contracted space between the Danube and mount Hæmus, they were reinforced by a strong body of Alans, who had found an opportunity of crossing the river ; and, being strengthened by other accessions, they burst through all obstacles, and ra-



vaged the country with fire and sword, even to the verge of the Hellespont.

To oppose the barbarians with effect, Valens had solicited speedy assistance from his nephew, who promised to attend to the reasonable application. When the preparations of the western potentate were nearly completed, the Allemanni, whose king Priarius had procured secret

A. D. 377. intelligence of the intended march into the eastern empire, crossed the Rhine in the winter, to the number of 80,000 men. The young prince was not intimidated by this irruption. He trusted to the skill and courage of the legionaries, to the judgement and experience of Nannienus, and the ardent spirit of Mellobaudes. The two armies long disputed the honor of the day: but the Romans were ultimately successful, destroying the far greater part of the invading host. Gratian then advanced into the territories of the foe, stormed the fortified hills, and enforced the submission of the chieftains, who were compelled to surrender many of their youthful countrymen for the military service of the empire.

Prudence and policy required, that Valens should await the arrival of his gallant and victorious colleague, before he ventured to encounter the Goths; and this delay might reasonably have been expected from a prince who was not remarkable for determined courage. He was not, indeed, very strongly inclined to take the field; but, being reproached by the inhabitants of Constantinople for his seeming unwillingness to advance against the enemy, he commenced his march with an appearance of alacrity. Sebastian, to whom he had given the command of the infantry, was detached with a select body to make an early impression upon the barbarians. He surprised a part of

.7 Ammian, lib. xxi. sect. 19—23.

B Ammian. lib. xxi. sect. 26—28.—Aurel. Vict. de Vit. et Moribus Imperat.—The battle was fought in Alsace, near the spot where Colmar now stands.

their army near the Hebrus, slew a considerable number, and carried off great spoils. This success animated the emperor, who, proceeding to Adrianople, and calling a council of war, was more disposed to listen to that advice which recommended a speedy engagement, than to the cautious suggestions of the advocates for delay. He hoped to eclipse the fame of Gratian, and to secure his frontiers by a splendid victory.

Fritigern, pretending to be desirous of peace, sent a Christian messenger to the camp of Valens, with a promise of forbearance and accommodation, if the Goths should be allowed to reside permanently in Thrace, and gratified with presents of corn and cattle, until they should be able to raise supplies by their own industry. This was the public notification; but the envoy, at the same time, privately declared, in the name of his artful employer, that he did not expect the full assent of the barbarians to the proposed reconciliation, unless the emperor should over-awe them by approaching with his formidable legions. This artifice amused Valens, and served to render him rashly eager for a conflict. He dismissed the envoy without a satisfactory answer, and hastened, as he thought, to acquire immortal fame. Fritigern, on the other hand, strove to expedite the decision of arms, before Gratian could have an opportunity of joining his colleague.

Amidst a renewal of negotiation, in which neither party acted with entire sincerity, the martial arrangements were made, while the legionaries were almost ready to faint, in consequence of a fatiguing march in a sultry morning, without that refreshment which was necessary to invigorate their frames. The disposition of the imperial army did not manifest the skill of an able general; and a body of Asiatic auxiliaries, commencing the action before the other troops were fully prepared, re-

Aug. 9.

ceived a speedy and disgraceful check. At this instant, Alatheus returned from an excursion with a strong *corps* of cavalry, and furiously assaulted the right wing, which he soon threw into disorder. Fritigern then attacked the left division, which, being commanded by Sebastian, made a more strenuous resistance than the right, and repelled the enemy; who returned, however, to the charge, and obtained an extraordinary advantage. Deserted by the horsemen, the legionary battalions were at length surrounded by the Goths; and a calamitous defeat ensued. On the side of the Romans, the loss is said to have amounted to two-thirds of the army. Among the slain were Sebastian and Trajan<sup>10</sup>.

This disastrous conflict diffused great consternation through the empire. It was compared with the defeat at Cannæ, and was considered as even more disgraceful, because the victors on this occasion were inferior to the Carthaginians in civilisation and in the arts of life. It certainly exhibited an instance of Roman degeneracy, and may be adduced as a symptom of the decline of the empire.

Valens was removed by his eunuchs to a cottage, where he was submitting to some applications for the cure of a wound which he had received, when a hostile party reached the spot. Being assailed with arrows from the roof, the Goths set fire to the cottage, without knowing that it contained the vanquished prince, who thus perished by that mode of death to which, in his arbitrary career, he had subjected many innocent persons";—a striking example of retributive justice.

10 Ammian. lib. xxxi. sect. 35—39.—Zosim. iv. 23.—Sozomen. vi. 40.

11 Ammian. lib. xxxi. sect. 46.—Zosim. lib. iv.—Hieronymi Chron.—Ammianus has attempted to delineate the character of this prince: but he betrays a strange inconsistency in attributing to him "a liberal moderation of mind," while he allows that he was prone to cruelty; that he sought advantage and enrolment from the groans and miseries of his subjects; and, torturing trivial offences into a disrespect to himself, raged against the lives and seized the



The victorious barbarians eagerly formed the siege of Adrianople; but the city was so bravely defended, that all assaults were fruitless. The enemy then diffused their ravages over Thrace, Mœsia, Illyria, and Macedon, and filled the country with terror and consternation. Gratian did not venture to attack the fierce invaders, but checked his steps when he heard of the calamitous defeat, and retreated into Pannonia.

Alarmed at the danger to which the empire was exposed, Gratian became fully sensible of the extraordinary difficulty of defending such an extent of territory against the increasing vigor of barbarian hostility. He might, without opposition, have assumed the supreme government of the East: but he prudently restrained his ambition, and was inclined to renounce the weight of additional empire. When he had fixed his mind upon the choice of a colleague, he repaired to the camp, and, having harangued the troops on the necessity of dividing the burthen of government amidst the disorders and convulsions of the times, he informed them that Theodosius was the object of his selection. Not a murmur of disapprobation was heard in the assembly; but, on the contrary, loud acclamations interrupted the imperial orator, who, resuming his discourse, extolled the merit of the victorious general, and declared him emperor of the East<sup>Jan 16.</sup>. In this appointment, the eastern part of <sup>378.</sup> the Illyrian præfecture was added to the provinces which Valens had governed; and the new emperor soon presented himself to his gratified subjects at Thessalonica, the

property of the rich. Is this conduct compatible with liberality and moderation of mind?—The writer adds, that, although he pretended to encourage the fair process of the law, he would not suffer any cause to be decided against his own inclination; and that he lent a ready ear to the allegations of accusers, without regard to the truth or falsehood of the charges. Moderation includes the idea of *equity*, to which these proceedings are by no means accordant.

12 August, de Civit. Dei.—Socrat. lib. v. cap. 2.—Theodor. v. 6.

capital of that division. Being visited by persons of distinction from all parts of his dominions, he received their communications and advice with patient attention; granted reasonable requests; and softened his refusals by politeness of manner.

After the adjustment of political concerns, Theodosius took the field against the Goths in Thrace. Some conflicts quickly occurred; but so little is said of these engagements, that they were probably unimportant, with an exception of that battle in which Modares (a Goth in the Roman service) distinguished himself by the slaughter or captivity of a numerous host<sup>13</sup>.

A. D. In the ensuing winter, a severe illness of the  
379. emperor excited the apprehensions of the people, who dreaded the loss of an esteemed prince. He had long been a Christian in his sentiments, but had not yet received the sacrament of baptism. That ceremony was now administered to him; and his recovery was attributed to his pious zeal. He thenceforward paid extraordinary attention to the affairs of the church, and signalised his regard for orthodoxy by discountenancing and harassing the Arians.

While Theodosius was incapacitated for vigorous action, Gratian endeavoured to keep the Goths in check; but, when he found that they were not likely to yield a triumph to his arms, he concluded a treaty with them<sup>14</sup>, which his colleague, when he became convalescent, did not refuse to confirm. This agreement did not so far repress their warlike ardor, as to discourage them from a renewal of invasion and of ravages, even to the borders of Greece. Theodosius advanced to punish them for their violation of treaty; but, after an escape from the danger of a total defeat, he contented himself with the mere repression of their progress<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 25.

<sup>14</sup> Prosp. Aquitan. Chron.

<sup>15</sup> This seems to be a fair conclusion from the discordant accounts of the campaign.

In the intervals of respite from Roman hostility, the dissensions among the Goths rose to so great a height, that a formidable party attacked Athanaric, because he was unwilling to concur in a new irruption into the provincial territories. Being unable to withstand the power of his adversaries, he retired with a small army, A. D. 380. and sought protection at Constantinople. Theodosius received him with friendly respect; but the fugitive prince did not long survive his emigration. His protector was extremely desirous of his conversion to Christianity; but, while Athanaric admired the political establishment of the empire, he did not testify any inclination for a change of religion. His attendant countrymen were so pleased at the kindness of Theodosius, that they promised to secure his territories, on the southern side of the Danube, from all invasion or encroachment. Their vigilance, however, did not prevent an army of barbarians (among whom were the Huns) from invading the empire; but these intruders were defeated by the legionaries, and driven back with disgrace over that river which they had dared to cross<sup>16</sup>.

The majority of the Gothic tribes, over-awed by the power of Theodosius, and impressed with a due sense of his merit, at length resolved to submit to his authority. A. D. 381. He granted favorable terms to the solicitations of Fritigern; assigned a portion of Thrace for the residence of the Visi-Goths; and stationed a multitude of Ostro-Goths in Asia Minor. They were exempted from imposts for a certain period, and declared not amenable to the ordinary jurisdiction of the empire<sup>17</sup>.

The elevation of Theodosius had given great disgust to a Spaniard named Maximus, who had some authority in South-Britain, without being (as several writers have affirmed) a provincial governor. He thought himself equal-

<sup>16</sup> Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 33, 34.

<sup>17</sup> Idatii Fast. Consul.—Themist. Orat.



ly worthy of high power, and therefore took every opportunity of extending his interest among the troops, that he might obtain by their support the honors and advantages of independent sway. He profited by the decline of Gratian's popularity. That prince, from a disinclination to public business, and a fondness for the chase and other sports, had thrown the burthen of government upon interested and artful ministers, whose rapacity and injustice were secretly censured, if not openly and loudly reprobated; and, although he had evinced courage in the field of war, and had treated the soldiers with kindness and liberality, he had highly displeased them by his partiality for a body of Alans, whom he had enrolled as his guards, whose dress and arms he adopted, and whom he even consulted in important concerns<sup>18</sup>. This impolitic conduct inflamed the minds of the troops even to the disloyalty of revolt; and the emissaries of Maximus studiously encouraged their disaffection. This aspiring adventurer passed over to Gaul with the legionaries of Britain and a multitude of provincials; and, having augmented his force upon the continent, he marched against the emperor, who, roused by his danger, appeared at the head of an army near Lutetia. For five days, the imperialists skirmished with the revolvers. A body of Mauritanian auxiliaries then deserted Gratian, and saluted Maximus with the title of sovereignty. A general defection ensued; and only 300 horsemen accompanied the unfortunate prince in his flight toward the Alps. He hoped to secure himself in the territories of Valentinian; but, stopping at Lugdunum, he was overtaken by Andragathius, one of the principal officers of Maximus, and put to death without  
 Aug. 25, 382. hesitation, as if he had been an incorrigible tyrant or a rebellious traitor<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Zosim—Vict. Jun.

<sup>19</sup> St. Ambrose says, that he was invited to an entertainment by a supposed friend, the governor of the province, and treacherously put to death. The

If the good qualities of Gratian had been accompanied with a sound judgement and vigor of mind, his career would, in all probability, have been more prosperous, and he might have closed in peace a flourishing reign. But his character was too feeble for the licentious and disorderly times in which he lived. He suffered himself to be governed both in politics and in religion; and his confidence, as might have been expected, was abused in both departments. Occasional misgovernment was the result of his inattention to affairs of state; and the zeal of arbitrary prelates led him into intolerance. But it is allowed that he had some share of eloquence and of literary taste; that he was chaste and temperate, courteous and friendly, and more humane than the majority of those princes, whose actions are recorded in ancient history.

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## LETTER XXIV.

*Continuation of the ROMAN History, to the Death of THEODOSIUS.*

BY the death of Gratian, the bold usurper was easily enabled to seize all the territories which that prince had governed: but his ambition was not content even with that extensive portion of dominion; and he hoped to take such decisive advantage of the youth and inexperience of Valentinian, as to dispossess him of that power and authority which he derived from his father's designation and his brother's acquiescence. But this was a work

authority of a contemporary prelate is surely preferable to that of Socrates or of Sozomen, who wrote in the following century, and who affirm, that Andragathius deluded the emperor by a report of the approach of his wife in a litter; that he hastened to meet her; and, when he expected that she would spring into his arms, the base rebel leaped out, and committed an act of murderous treason.

of time,—a task which required all his courage and address.

Being desirous of procuring from Theodosius a confirmation of his pretensions, he sent deputies to propose an alliance with him, or threaten him with immediate hostilities. The emperor, dissembling his displeasure and indignation, because he was not prepared to act with vigor against Maximus, gave a favorable answer, and outwardly acknowledged, as an associate, one whom he resolved to take the first opportunity of treating as an enemy<sup>1</sup>.

Dreading the views of Maximus, Justina deputed the archbishop of Milan to ward off the storm by his holy influence and earnest remonstrances. The prelate was received with that respect which his character deserved; and either his arguments and expostulations were operative, or (which is more probable) the usurper was spontaneously willing to postpone his enterprise, until he had established his power in Gaul, Britain, and Spain. He fixed the seat of his empire at Treves, assuming, with the consent of Theodosius and Valentinian, the dignified title of Augustus.

To embroil, in the mean time, the government of the master of Italy, he encouraged the zeal of the pagans against the Christians of Rome. The senator Symmachus, acting as leader of the former party, presented a memorial to the young emperor, imputing a famine (which then prevailed) to the displeasure of the Gods at the discouragement of the ancient religion, and requesting the re-establishment, or at least the toleration, of that worship. Valentinian and his mother were not disinclined to a compliance with the more moderate part of the request; but the zeal and authority of Ambrose influenced them to a rejection of the whole.

While the empress yielded on this occasion to the arch-

<sup>1</sup> Zosim, lib. iv.



bishop, she resolved to oppose him in the cause of Arianism. She procured from her son an edict, permitting the followers of that doctrine to enjoy the public exercise of their religion, and denouncing capital punishment against all who should dare to oppose them in their acts of piety and worship; and, having in vain endeavoured to obtain a church by persuasion, she resolved to dispossess the catholics of one of their sacred edifices by open violence. The report of her intentions alarmed the people. They declared, that they would defend the churches against all intrusion, and protect their revered metropolitan, whom some imperial emissaries had attempted to carry off. The cathedral was, in a manner, garrisoned by devout catholics, whom, while he remonstrated against all intemperance of zeal, he animated by the fervor of his discourses to a vigorous support of their privileges. Being required, by the commander of a military detachment, to surrender the church to the will of his sovereign, he replied, that he would not quit it while life remained; and that he was ready to submit to the extremity of outrage, rather than violate his conscience. The governor of the city, after a consultation with Justina and her son, proposed that a church in the suburbs should be allowed to the Arians by the catholics, who might, on this condition, retain all the other churches. To this request neither the archbishop nor the people would accede; and the cause of orthodoxy was so firmly maintained, that the court, after violent attempts upon two of the churches, finding the troops disinclined to hostilities, desisted from the odious scheme<sup>2</sup>.

Maximus affected to be shocked at the ill treatment of the catholics of Milan, and offered to defend the archbishop against all violence or injury. He complained to Theodosius of the unjustifiable conduct of the empress,

and requested that prince not to oppose him, if he should take vigorous measures for the support of the true faith in Italy. Theodosius concurred with Maximus in his religious views, but earnestly wished to prevent his interference in the concerns of that part of the empire. An irruption of barbarians, requiring the immediate attention of the eastern potentate, retarded the enforcement of his views against the sovereign of Gaul.

**A.D.** <sup>385</sup> A considerable army of Scythians<sup>3</sup>, led by Odotheus, advanced to the Danube, and demanded a freedom of passage. Promotus, commander of the troops that guarded the banks, refused to grant the desired permission, and, not trusting solely to force, he had recourse to artifice. Some of the soldiers, who understood the language of the strangers, appeared before the barbarians as deserters, and offered, in consideration of a liberal reward, to betray the Roman general and his army. The proposal being adopted, preparations were made by Odotheus for crossing the river in the night, and by Promotus (who had received accurate intelligence of the negotiation) for baffling the attempts of the intruders. The flower of the Scythian army being placed upon rafts, Odotheus flattered himself with the hope of surprising the legionaries in a state of repose: but, as his men advanced, they were exposed to attacks from well-manned vessels; and a great part of the division perished in the stream. Those rafts which escaped the cruisers, fell upon a chain of barks, extended for two miles and a half along the bank; and the unfortunate passengers were slain, drowned, or captured. Their associates, who had not yet ventured to pass over, were obliged to surrender, with their wives and children. The emperor, who soon after reached the camp, released the prisoners, that they might be so conciliated by his cle-

<sup>3</sup> Called *Prothingi* in the copies of Zosimus; but seemingly from a mere error of some transcribers;—*Grothingi* by Idatius, and *Gruthungi* by Claudian.

mency as to enter into his service: He distributed the spoils among his soldiers ; and, applauding the conduct of their leader, promised to give him a high command in the eventual war against Maximus<sup>4</sup>.

When it appeared that the enemy of Valentinian had made great preparations for the execution of his ambitious schemes, Justina apologised to Ambrose for her late violence, and requested him to renew his solicitations at the court of Maximus, in favor of peace. He did not reject the commission as hopeless, or refuse to put himself in the power of a tyrannical usurper. He trusted to the law of nations, as well as to the sanctity of his character. Maximus received him with exterior complacency, and professed a desire of negotiation ; but soon dismissed him upon a frivolous pretence. Concluding that the archbishop had not promoted the views of the court with sufficient zeal or address, Valentinian sent Dominus, one of his principal ministers, to Treves, for the adjustment of all disputes. Maximus amused the ambassador with plausible promises, loaded him with presents, and consigned to his guidance an auxiliary force, by which the young emperor (he said) might be enabled to defend Pannonia against the insults of the barbarians. Without the envoy's knowlege, he followed this detachment over the Alps with the bulk of his army, and terrified Valentinian by his unexpected appearance at Aquileia. That prince and his mother opportunely escaped, and, after a circuitous voyage, passed up the Thermaic gulph to Thessalonica. The artful invader, in the mean time, took possession of the territories which were thus deserted by their sovereign ; and, marking his *route* with wanton ravages, he produced, by the influence of fear, a temporary submission and obedience<sup>5</sup>.

The emperor of the East had, for some time, seemed

<sup>4</sup> Zosim. lib. iv.

<sup>5</sup> Histoire de Théodose le Grand, par Flechier, livre iii.



intent upon war; but, when the question was brought under discussion by the solicitations of the imperial fugitive, he is said to have expressed a wish for negotiation; and it is added, by a writer who is unfriendly to the memory of this great prince, that his unwillingness to engage in hostilities could only be removed by the allurements of female beauty. Justina (he says) tempted him by the charms of her daughter Galla; and, when he was so completely captivated as to offer immediate marriage, she declared that she would not give her consent, unless he would attack Maximus with alacrity and vigor. Love induced him to comply; and he entered with zeal into the proposed war<sup>6</sup>.

Before he commenced hostilities, the financial oppressions of his government endangered his authority in the Syrian capital. His treasury being nearly exhausted by a variety of demands, he had not a sufficient sum for the gratification of the soldiers, to each of whom it was customary to make a pecuniary present, in the fifth and tenth years of an emperor's reign. It was the former term with regard to his son Arcadius, whom he had associated in the imperial dignity; and, to unite the donatives, he anticipated his own tenth year. Being assessed on this occasion, the people readily submitted to the orders of the court, with an exception of the citizens of Antioch, who reprobated the demand as unnecessary and unreasonable, and declared that they would not be tamely plundered. They threatened the governor with their indignation and vengeance; but he avoided their rage by flight. Their reflexions upon the characters of the emperor and his

6 Zosim. lib. iv.—Gibbon, with his usual gallantry, expresses his regard for "a gentle hero, who may be supposed to receive his armour from the hands of "love," and defends the narrative of Zosimus against the objections of Tillemont; but it is probable, from the gratitude and policy of Theodosius, that he would have taken vengeance for the murder of Gratian, and have supported the interest of the imperial family against usurpatory aggression, even if the princess Galla had not been presented to his view.

father, and of his deceased wife Flaccilla, were severe and sarcastic. They threw down the statues of the family, and dragged them through the city ; but the arrival of a body of soldiers quickly put an end to the commotion. Encouraged by this seasonable aid, the governor re-appeared in the city ; and, apprehending many of the inhabitants, who were pointed out as offenders by two wounded comrades, he put them to death without the formality of a trial. The natural irascibility of the emperor was inflamed to an excess of rage, when he was informed of the particulars of this sedition. He denounced the most furious vengeance, declaring that he would burn the city to the ground, and massacre the whole population. The rumor of this horrible menace drove a great number of the inhabitants to the mountains and deserts, while those who remained were dejected and despondent. When commissioners had arrived from the court, to inquire into the delinquency of the citizens, and punish those who might be found to have been most guilty, all the anxiety of alarm prevailed. Before they began the investigation, they annulled the privileges of the city, pronounced it to be a mere village under the control of Laodicea, shut up its places of amusement, and ordered a discontinuance of those gifts of corn which the inferior citizens had occasionally received from the public stock. Proceeding to the dreaded inquiry, they condemned many of the principal inhabitants to a loss of their property ; and it was expected that even death would be the fate of a considerable number. During the process, the monks and hermits of the mountains interposed between the despairing citizens and their arbitrary judges, and labored with friendly zeal to procure an extension of mercy to the penitent offenders. One of these pious Syrians met the imperial officers, and said, " Tell your master, that he ought to dread the di-

“vine wrath. If some unruly persons have thrown down his statues, is that a sufficient provocation to justify the destruction of the living and rational images of God? Statues may be repaired, or new ones erected; but, when you have put men to death for what cannot be considered as an injury, you cannot restore them to life.” The commissioners were affected by this interesting appeal; and one of them promised to return to Constantinople for fresh instructions. Flavian had already presented himself before the emperor, as the episcopal deputy of the Antiochian community; and his intercession, and mild expostulations, procured pardon for all the citizens. The judicial sentences were revoked; the prisoners were liberated; and the privileges of the city were restored. The clemency of Theodosius, on this occasion, has received greater praise than it deserves. Forbearance was his duty, in the case of a mere riot, of which the people quickly repented<sup>8</sup>.

When the preparations for war were completed, the emperor left Arcadius under the guardianship of the præfect Tatian and the philosopher Themistius; and, dividing his army into three bodies, he advanced into Pannonia, where

A. D. Maximus had taken his station. Promotus had  
387. the command of the cavalry, Timasius of the infantry: Arbogastes, a Frank, conducted a body of German auxiliaries; and other officers led into the field battalions of Goths, Alans, and Huns. The Save, notwithstanding the rapidity of the stream, was passed with little difficulty; and, after a short conflict, the troops of Maximus were routed near the walls of Siscia. His brother Marcellinus, being afterward attacked near the Drave, fought with great spirit, but could not prevent a defeat. Maximus fled with the utmost rapidity to Aquileia, where he was exposed to the dangers of a siege without a prospect of relief. His soldiers, being desirous of conci-



liating Theodosius, seised their leader while he was distributing money among them, stripped him of his imperial *insignia*, and surrendered him to the victorious prince. While compassion for his misfortune was contending, in the breast of his powerful adversary, with the desire of vengeance, the indignation of some of the attendant warriors prompted them to remove him from the tent, and put him to death<sup>9</sup>. His devoted partisan, Andragathius, not expecting mercy, drowned himself when the enemy approached his station. This officer had cruised in the Ionian sea with a light squadron, in the hope of intercepting Justina and Valentinian, whom Theodosius had sent back to Italy: but they eluded his vigilance; and the young prince was enabled, by the success of his protector, to recover all the territories which he had lost by his flight. He also received his brother's share of dominion<sup>10</sup>, which Theodosius, in the opinion of the military world, might lawfully have appropriated by the right of conquest.

The victor, while he resided at Milan, gave friendly advice for the government of Valentinian's territories, without neglecting the concerns of the eastern empire; and, in the spring, he entered Rome in triumph, when A. D. his able and faithful generals, Promotus and Ti- 388. masius, were in possession of the consular dignity. He won the hearts of many of the citizens by his affability and gracious manners; but he disgusted those who were still attached to paganism, by refusing to grant the request of Symmachus and the senate for the preservation of the altar of Victory (of which, after it had been removed by Gratian, Maximus had permitted the re-erection), and by suppressing the feeble remains of the system of idolatrous polytheism. The pagan leader, having also offended Theodosius by his attachment to the tyrant, was banished

<sup>9</sup> Pacat. Panegyri.—His son was slain by Arbogastes; but his daughters were taken under the conqueror's protection.

<sup>10</sup> Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 50.

from Rome ; but he was soon recalled, and promoted in the sequel to the consulate. Many senators, and other distinguished citizens, were now induced to declare themselves converts to the prevailing religion ; and Christianity triumphed over the fabric of ancient superstition.

A. D. 389. Theodosius was still employed in regulating the affairs of Italy, when Thessalonica was agitated with alarming commotions. A charioteer in the service of Botheric (governor of Illyria and it's dependencies) being imprisoned by his master for his profligacy, the citizens requested his liberation, that he might exercise his skill in the public sports. The favor, though repeatedly solicited, was not granted. This disappointment inflamed the populace into clamor and sedition. Some of the magistrates were insulted and even overwhelmed with stones ; and the governor, being attacked in his palace, was assassinated by the furious rioters. Such an outrageous defiance of the imperial authority roused the intemperate wrath of Theodosius. He immediately ordered, that a certain number of the inhabitants should be put to death : but Ambrose and other prelates so forcibly remonstrated against the intended cruelty, that he expressed his willingness to spare the lives of all, even the most guilty. Some of his courtiers, however, warmly exhorted him to exercise that rigor which alone would prevent similar outrages ; and their appeal to his wounded feelings and insulted dignity revived the anger which the bishops had allayed. He violated his recent promise, and sent an order, not for a regular process of law, but for an indiscriminate massacre. The atrocious mandate was executed with the aggravation of treachery. An invitation to the games precluded all suspicion, on the part of the people, who eagerly flocked to the scene of diversion. A preconcerted signal being given, the slaughter of the spectators, the majority of whom were innocent, com

menced ; and above 7000 individuals were murdered by military ruffians<sup>11</sup>.

This horrible cruelty has fixed an indelible stigma upon the name and character of Theodosius. From a prince whose general conduct was worthy of praise, an order for such a massacre could not have been expected, even if the provocation had been much greater. He lamented his violence, when cool reflexion had superseded his wrath ; and he wished that he had followed the advice of the prelates. His inhumanity severely shocked the feelings of Ambrose, who addressed to him a letter of strong reproof, and refused to admit him into the cathedral, when he signified his desire of receiving the sacrament. For eight months the imperial sinner was excluded from the church ; but, as his penitence seemed then to entitle him to absolution, he requested from the archbishop a restoration to the privileges of the Christian profession. He employed his chief minister as his intercessor, and authorised him to announce his sincere contrition. Ambrose complied with the request, but not before he had procured the enactment of a law, requiring that thirty days should pass between the delivery of a sentence of death and its execution<sup>12</sup>. The emperor, being introduced into the cathedral, humbled himself by prostration, tore his hair, struck his forehead, and shed tears of sorrow. He then received the communion with every mark of devotion, and was assured of the returning favor of Heaven.

When tranquillity and order seemed to be fully restored in the West, Theodosius prepared for his return to the East. Arriving in Macedon, he found that province in a state of perturbation and alarm. A body of Gothic

<sup>11</sup> Theodor. lib. v. cap. 17.—Sozomen. vii. 24.—Ambrosii Epist.—Paulin. Vit. Ambros.

<sup>12</sup> Theodor. v. 17.—Sozomen.—Some writers assign this law to a former period ; in which case, Theodosius gave new force to a neglected ordinance.



marauders severely harassed the peaceful inhabitants ; and, even after the imperial troops had obtained a considerable advantage over them, they were so far from being discouraged, that they attacked the prince himself in his camp, and involved him in the most serious danger. He saved his life by a hasty retreat ; and meeting Promotus in his flight, left to his valor the task of routing the assailants. With such vigor did his division rush upon the barbarians, that few escaped the avenging sword<sup>13</sup>. He did not long survive his victory, being killed in Thrace by the Basternæ, either in fair hostility, or at the treacherous instigation of Rufinus<sup>14</sup>, a Gallic adventurer, who, by talent and address, without honor or virtue, had acquired the favor and confidence of Theodosius, and had been the chief adviser of the massacre at Thessalonica.

The pernicious influence of the unprincipled minister was farther exemplified in the treatment of Tatian and his son Proculus. The high functions and the abilities of these officers (one of whom enjoyed the præfecture of the East, while the other presided at Constantinople) were considered, by the jealousy of Rufinus, as obstacles to the complete establishment of his power. He therefore procured the adduction of charges, imputing to them the guilt of rapacity and oppression ; and, as he was the chief

A. D. of the commissioners named for the trial, the  
 391. supposed offenders had no prospect of favor or of justice. The father was deprived of all employment at court ; and the son, recalled by insidious promises from a retreat in which he hoped to avoid danger, was condemned to death. The emperor wished to save him ; but the messenger whom he sent with that view, being detained by Rufinus, did not reach the place of execution before the fatal blow was given<sup>15</sup>.

13 Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 51, 52.

14 Zosim. iv. 54.

15 Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 55.

While Rufinus was permitted, by the indolence of Theodosius, to domineer in the East, a storm brooded over the fortunes of the western potentate. Arbogastes, who governed Gaul in the name of Valentinian, was impelled by ambition, and encouraged by the attachment of the troops, to aim at the sovereignty. He so artfully extended his influence, that the young prince, who then resided in that province, found himself encompassed by the friends and dependents of the aspiring general, and had not the freedom of will or the use of his lawful power. Resenting the audacious tyranny of one who was bound to be subservient to his orders, he so far roused himself from the depression and degradation in which he had for some years existed, as to announce his command for the immediate resignation of every post of honor or profit enjoyed by Arbogastes; but the bold Frank declared, that he would retain his power and authority in defiance of the emperor. Alarmed at this menacing demeanor, Valentinian applied to Theodosius for protection; but his barbarian enemy resolved to deprive him of his life, before any aid could reach him. The præfect Flavian, and other intriguing adversaries of Christianity, promised to support Arbogastes in his disloyal and revolutionary schemes; and, while he waited for an opportunity of gratifying his inordinate ambition, he continued to exercise that authority of which his master could not easily divest him.

Eugenius, a professor of grammar and rhetoric, had introduced himself into notice and employment at court, and had attached himself to the interest of Arbogastes, who, considering him as a man of learning and ability, and thinking that his own invasion of the sovereignty might disgust the Romans, proposed to his friend the assumption of the imperial dignity. Having obtained, by repeated persuasions, the assent of the rhetorician, the traitor

May 15.

Valentinian in his bed<sup>16</sup>; and it was reported that, in a fit of melancholy, he had offered violence to himself. This prince deserved a less calamitous fate. He was humane and liberal; temperate in his habits, and correct in his morals. He had a regard for justice, a sense of duty, and feelings of patriotism.

The murder of Valentinian excited surprise, sorrow, and indignation, in the court of Constantinople. Theodosius lamented the loss of a friend, and execrated the treasonable violence of the base conspirators; and the empress sincerely deplored the untimely fate of her brother, urging her lord to avenge his death by the exemplary punishment of the assassins. He was disposed to exert himself in a just cause; but, as he did not usually undertake a war without mature deliberation, it long remained doubtful whether he would really take arms against Eugenius, who, by the interest of his powerful friend, had obtained the vacant dignity of emperor of the West. When envoys arrived from Gaul, to request the assent of Theodosius to the new appointment, he complained of the murderous injustice of Arbogastes, who, although he avoided all open interference in the embassy, and kept himself in the background of the political theatre, was known to be the director of the movements of Eugenius. The ecclesiastics who belonged to the deputation asserted the innocence both of the emperor and his general; but their mode of exculpation served only to strengthen the suspicions which were generally entertained of the guilt of Arbogastes. No determinate or categorical answer was given to the envoys, who were not, however, dismissed without valuable presents<sup>17</sup>.

The usurper, who was merely a nominal Christian, gave his confidence to the friends of paganism, by whose advice he re-opened the temples and restored the use of sacri-

16 Socrat. Hist. lib. v. cap. 24.—Epiphan. de Mens. et Pond.—Sozomen. vii. 22.

17 Zosim. lib. iv. sect. 57.



fices<sup>18</sup>. He conceded these points, he said, to the re-iterated solicitations of respectable citizens, not from his own unbiassed inclinations. Ambrose, in a spirited letter, reprobated that disregard to Christianity, which induced him to encourage a false religion; and Theodosius, more shocked at the revival of paganism in the West, than at the subjection of that division of the empire to a low-born usurper, promulgated a new edict against the practice of idolatry in the East. This prince had not yet fully decided the question of peace or war; and, being desirous of learning the sentiments of a supposed prophet upon the important subject, he sent a trusty messenger into Upper-Egypt, to consult John, a celebrated monk, who had ventured to prognosticate the success of the pious prince in the contest with Maximus. The answer imported, that the victory would devolve to Theodosius, but that it would not be obtained without a great loss of lives<sup>19</sup>.

Encouraged by the prospect of success, the emperor gave orders for an expedition against Arbogastes and Eugenius. The preparations corresponded with the magnitude of the enterprise; but he provided for the new war without additional taxes: he even remitted some which Tatian had imposed; and, while he thus relieved his people, the citizens and provincials of the West were severely burthened. Having added to his regular legions a multitude of Goths, Armenians, Iberians; and other auxiliaries, he commenced his march toward Pannonia, with the standard of the cross displayed before him. The chief commanders under him were Timasius and Stilico, a Vandal chieftain, who had espoused the niece of his imperial friend. The Goths were headed by Gainas, and the Iberians by Bacurius, whose character bore the stamp of high respectability.

The zealous exertions of Arbogastes and Flavian drew

18 Paulin. Vit. Ambrosii.

19 Theodor lib. v. cap. 24.

forth a great army in the name of Eugenius. It seemed to be the first object of the three confederates to block up the passes into Italy from Pannonia and Illyria; but this task was not performed with the requisite skill or caution. The passes were easily forced; and the army of Theodosius, after defeating Flavian, who fell in the action, approached a spacious plain, which was terminated by the walls of Aquileia. The auxiliaries quickly commenced a conflict; but they were so firmly opposed by the Gauls and Germans, that they retreated after a very severe loss; which, perhaps, the emperor did not regret, as it was the prognosticated prelude of ultimate success. At the same time, a strong detachment, which had taken possession of a commanding eminence, menaced his rear; but this danger soon vanished; for the officers of that division intimated a wish to join him, if he would reward them for the transfer of their service. He readily agreed to their demands; and the detachment became a part of his force.

Sept. 6,  
393.

In the next conflict, the violence of the wind harassed the troops of Eugenius, and baffled the operation or diminished the effect of their missiles, while it gave a proportional advantage to their adversaries. Yet Arbogastes continued to animate the combatants, until the redoubled exertions of the eastern army decided the contest. The remaining troops offered submission, and implored mercy. Eugenius was seised by a party of his own soldiers, and delivered up to Theodosius; at whose feet he instantly threw himself; and, while he was in the attitude of supplication, one of the victorious warriors struck off his head. His military associate fled from the field, and, not expecting clemency or indulgence, pierced himself with his own sword<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Socrat. lib. v.—Sozomen.—Theodoret says, that the emperor reproached Eugenius for his treason and rebellion, satirised his zeal for paganism, and condemned him to death.

The general submission of the Romans and provincials to the sway of the conqueror, rendered him the sole sovereign of those spacious and flourishing countries, which extended from the Atlantic ocean to the frontiers of Persia. Satisfied with the death of the three leaders of the revolt, he pardoned their numerous accomplices and partisans, and treated with particular kindness the children of Eugenius and Flavian. He rewarded the exertions of his soldiers with all the spoils of the field, and attached them to his service by other acts of liberality. He restored the influence of Christianity, where-ever it had been depressed during the late usurpation ; and, having named respectable citizens to the consulate and other high offices, he repaired to Milan, where, in concert with Ambrose, he attended with augmented zeal to religious concerns. Feeling the approach of severe illness, he resolved to receive the eucharist in the cathedral ; and he was yet at the altar, when Honorius, whom he had invited from Constantinople into Italy, appeared before him. He conjured the archbishop to take that prince and Arcadius under his spiritual protection, and act as a father to both, if he should survive their natural parent. The increase of his disorder (which was of the hydropic species) fixed his thoughts upon that awful change which the greatest prince can no more avoid than the lowest peasant. Summoning the courtiers and senators into his chamber, he earnestly exhorted those who were yet pagans to renounce their erroneous creed, and adopt the only true religion, as the defeat of Eugenius had concurred with other incidents to expose the fallacy of their oracles and the impotence of their gods. By his last will he released his people from various imposts, and recommended to his successors a patriotic œconomy ; and he confirmed the amnesty which he had recently granted. To Arcadius he assigned the eastern, to Honorius the western empire, appointing Stilico guardian of the younger prince, and



commander of the armies of both divisions. After these arrangements, his disorder did not preclude him from

Jan. 17. presiding at the games of the Circus; but he  
394. died before the next morning dawned<sup>21</sup>.

When princes prosper in all their enterprises, it may generally be concluded, that they are either endowed with great talents, or are served by able ministers and generals. Theodosius was fortunate in the latter instance; and his own abilities were, at the same time, respectable. He had a good capacity, which he had in some measure improved by study, but not to such an extent as a diligent student might have reached. Without proceeding to the depth of erudition, he acquired a considerable knowledge of the history of Europe, particularly of the affairs of Rome and Greece. He was acquainted with the true interests of his country, and was disposed to promote them with zeal. His ambition was chastened by judgement: he did not engage in war for the acquisition of territory, or the mere love of fame, but for the chastisement of usurpers, the discomfiture of invaders, and the restoration of law and order. Clemency was his general characteristic: but he was too severe to those who were, in his opinion, less orthodox than himself; and we have seen him, in one notorious instance, guilty of excessive cruelty. This deviation from his usual course was the effect of that irascibility of disposition of which he was fully conscious, and which he studiously endeavoured (but not always with sufficient resolution or vigor) to repress and control. In his private character, he was affable, humane, liberal, and grateful: he pursued pleasure within the limits of moderation and decorum; and, if he too often gave way to the enjoyment of indolence, he was capable of rousing himself when important business called for his attention. Upon the whole, he was an able statesman, legislator, and warrior, and a prince of great and indisputable merit.

<sup>21</sup> His age is differently stated. Socrates says, that his life was prolonged to sixty years; but the junior Victor confines it to his fiftieth year.

## LETTER XXV.

*History of the WESTERN and EASTERN Empires, to the Death of*  
**HONORIUS.**

THE arrangements of Theodosius the Great, for the division of the too extensive empire over which he presided, were faithfully observed. His sons were readily acknowledged as emperors of the East and West: every province, and every class of the community, acquiesced in the partition. Arcadius was of an age which, with his education, might have qualified him for the task of government: but he had not sufficient vigor of mind to act for himself, or to follow the dictates of his own uninfluenced will. He was governed by Rufinus; while Honorius, who was yet a boy, was under professed and necessary guardianship. The former prince, however, would not suffer his minister to direct him in the choice of a wife. When Rufinus expected that his daughter would become empress of the East, Arcadius, influenced by his chamberlain Eutropius, who extolled the beauty and merit of Eudoxia, daughter of Bauto the Frank, accepted this lady for his wife, to the great disgust of Rufinus, who particularly resented the mode in which the matrimonial scheme was conducted. The nuptial preparations were expedited; and, when the public concluded that the præfect's daughter was the bride destined for Arcadius, the imperial officers stopped the procession at the house in which Eudoxia resided, and announced their master's choice by delivering to her the sponsal presents. For this insult, as he probably termed the behaviour of the court, Rufinus secretly vowed revenge<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Zosim, lib. v. sect. 2.

Supported by the testamentary designation of Theodosius, Stilico resolved to interfere in the direction of the affairs of the East. He was aware of the ambition of Rufinus, to whom he imputed dangerous and even treasonable views. At the same time, he thought his own love of power fully justifiable, notwithstanding the arbitrary excesses into which it led him. He began his march, with the legions both of the West and the East, on pretence of chastising the Goths, who threatened the empire with invasion. His advance excited the suspicions of Rufinus, who immediately desired Arcadius to send for the eastern army, and to order the retreat of the western troops with their intruding general. The order was obeyed; but the result was far from being conformable to the wish of the Constantinopolitan minister. Gainas conducted the recalled troops to the eastern capital; and, being met by the emperor and by Rufinus, he took an opportunity of surrounding the minister with soldiers, by whom he was instantly murdered<sup>2</sup>.

The death of an upstart, who had so shamefully abused his power, could not be lamented: it excited, indeed, the greatest joy; but, as Eutropius, the new possessor of his authority, who had artfully encouraged Stilico against him, was equally unprincipled and tyrannical, the people did not profit by the change. Stilico, at the same time, was disappointed in his hope of drawing Arcadius within his trammels, and was obliged to content himself with the chief sway over Honorius.

It is confidently asserted, and generally believed, that Rufinus, after the frustration of his project of a princely alliance, had invited the barbarians to rush into the imperial territories<sup>3</sup>, in the hope of seizing the sovereignty amidst the general confusion, if not of assuming it by their

<sup>2</sup> Socrat. lib. vi. cap. 1.—Zosim. v. 8.—Philostorg.

<sup>3</sup> Socrates and Sozomen mention this invitation as a report; but Zosimus speaks of it as an undoubted fact: it is also affirmed by Orosius.



professed aid. If the treachery of such conduct did not dissuade him from it, he ought to have been aware of the danger of introducing such turbulent visitants into the empire, or of exciting a storm which he might not be able to allay.

Alaric, a Gothic chieftain of great courage, talent, and influence, disgusted at the refusal of legionary direction, which he had solicited in preference to the command of his auxiliary countrymen, assembled an army of <sup>A. D.</sup> barbarians, and, having ravaged Macedon and <sup>395.</sup> Thessaly, entered Greece by the pass of Thermopylæ, of which the easy defence was neglected. He suffered his ferocious followers to commit brutal devastations and massacres in their way to Athens, of which they quickly obtained possession; and similar outrages were perpetrated in the Peloponnesus, before Stilico arrived to oppose the invaders. He defeated them in Arcadia, and enclosed them in a mountainous post; from which, however, <sup>A. D.</sup> they escaped by his subsequent negligence, and <sup>396.</sup> retired into Epirus. The eastern court then negotiated with Alaric; and, chiefly with a view of obstructing the triumph of Stilico, Eutropius adjusted, with the enemies of Rome, a treaty of friendship and alliance. The military government of the eastern division of Illyria was conferred by Arcadius upon Alaric, while he was invested by the Visi-Goths with the royal dignity.

The Roman empire was now divided between Stilico and Eutropius, rather than between the imbecile sons of Theodosius. With a view of embarrassing the former, the director of the East persuaded Gildo to revolt from Honorius, to whose division provincial Africa properly belonged. The ambitious and arbitrary governor aimed at entire independence; but, dissembling his views, he consented to transfer his allegiance to Arcadius. For this

violation of duty, he was stigmatised by the senate as a public enemy; and Stilico made preparations for the chastisement of the audacious rebel. As a want of the usual supplies of corn from Africa might have occasioned clamors and commotions, the minister procured a great quantity from Gaul and Spain, and thus secured the tranquillity of Rome. Unwilling to leave Italy, he sent Mascezel, Gildo's younger brother (who had fled from Afri-

A. D. 397. ca to save his threatened life), to conduct the war as the emperor's lieutenant. It is not probable that this commander had so few as 5000 men for his whole force, or that he encountered and defeated so many as 70,000 revoltors and auxiliaries: but these are the assertions of an ancient historian<sup>5</sup>. Whatever might have been the force of each party, the success of Mascezel is undoubted. The rebel general, being apprehended in his flight, strangled himself in prison; and the authority of Honorius was fully established in northern Africa; but the fate of the victorious commander was deplorable. After his return to Italy, he fell from his horse in passing over a bridge, and was drowned. It is affirmed, that, in consequence of a signal from Stilico, the attendants pushed him into the river<sup>6</sup>;—a story which has an air of improbability.

The tyrannical sway of Eutropius was not of very long duration. Gainas, who, after the murder of Rufinus, had deserted the interest of Stilico, and accepted a high military post from the favor of the powerful chamberlain, began to entertain hopes of supplanting his new patron. An opportunity of success seemed to be afforded by the intrigues of Trebigild, who, having the command of a body of Goths in Phrygia, promised to harass the minister by an insurrection. He commenced it in a manner

A. D. 398. that was worthy of his barbarian origin, wantonly

5 Orosius.

6 Zosim. lib. v. sect. 12.

murdering the provincials. Eutropius sent a detachment under Leo to crush him, and ordered Gainas to secure Thrace against all hostile attempts. A multitude of loyal slaves and rustics attacked the insurgents in Pisidia, and nearly annihilated their force; but Gainas, by sending supplies of men to his friend, enabled him to defeat Leo; and, by exaggerating the success of the rebels in his official accounts, alarmed the emperor, whom he assured that nothing but the removal or death of his violent and incapable minister could terminate the disorders of the state. After hesitating between his habitual subserviency to Eutropius and the fear of offending Gainas, Arcadius ventured to dismiss his obnoxious counsellor from all employment. This disgrace being unsatisfactory to an aspiring barbarian, who wished for the farther punishment of the political delinquent, a mandate of exile was pronounced against him, and he was put to death by the emperor's order<sup>7</sup>.

The chief sway in the cabinet devolved to the empress Eudoxia, who was not disposed to submit to the influence of Gainas. This bold adventurer now marked out for vengeance three of the counsellors of Arcadius, whom he knew to be unfriendly to his views: they were A. D. given up at his requisition, and were on the point 399. of being decapitated, when he graciously relented, and granted them the indulgence of exile. Demanding an audience, he met the emperor near Chalcedon, and insisted upon the grant of complete authority, not only over the Gothic subsidiaries, but also over the Roman legions. By his haughty tone he enforced compliance; and, having pacified Trebigild, he domineered over the court and nation. He introduced armed barbarians into Constantinople, and encouraged them to commit depredations and

<sup>7</sup> Zosim. lib. v. sect. 14—19. —He was consul in the year of his death; and the disgrace of having an eunuch in that honorable office was keenly felt by those who had any remains of Roman spirit.



outrages. He seemed intent upon the seizure of the sovereignty: but the guard and the citizens, when he had retired to a neighbouring station to concert measures with his friends and officers, attacked the Goths who were within the walls, and sacrificed about 7000 to their resentment.

Gainas now became more decidedly a rebel, and resolved to attempt the subjugation of the Asiatic provinces: but, sending his countrymen over the Hellespont upon rafts, he incautiously exposed them to the operations of a hostile fleet. A considerable number of the barbarians perished in the sea; and not a few were destroyed by the missiles of the loyal warriors, who were animated by the example of their commander Fravita, a Gothic veteran in the imperial service. Yet this officer was accused of having connived at the escape of many of the insurgents, as it was supposed that he had the whole body at his mercy. Arcadius, however, was so far satisfied with his exertions, as to invest him with the consular dignity<sup>8</sup>.

The escape of Gainas from his maritime adversaries gave him only a short respite from the fate which he deserved. Among the troops that supported him in his rebellion, were many legionaries and provincials: these he put to the sword, alleging that he could not depend upon their fidelity; and then, with the wreck of the barbarian host, he directed his march toward the Danube: but the Huns, suspecting him of an intention of invading their liberty and encroaching upon their possessions, crossed the river to meet him, repeatedly engaged his fierce partisans in Mœsia, and extinguished the revolt in his blood<sup>9</sup>.

Before the ruin of Gainas, a different army of barbarians had penetrated into the dominions of Honorius. Alaric and Radagaisus were the leaders. They passed the Ju-

<sup>8</sup> Sozomen. lib. viii. cap. 4.—Socrat. vi. 6.—Zosim.

<sup>9</sup> Zosim. lib. v. sect. 25, 26.—Sozomen.

lian Alps in defiance of every difficulty; ravaged the country with merciless fury; and gained possession of some considerable towns near the Adriatic sea. Their progress filled the Italian provinces with confusion; but the exertions of Stilico enforced the retreat of the enemy. Returning with a recruited army, Alaric struck such terror into the court, that the emperor was on the point of seeking refuge in Gaul. Rescued from that disgrace by the vigor of his general, Honorius derived hopes of ultimate success from the reported event of a fierce engagement on the banks of the Tanaro. The Goths were posted near Pollentia, having passed the Po with little difficulty. They were unexpectedly attacked A.D. 402. on Easter-day; but, not being so piously passive as to neglect their defence even at a time devoted to religious observances, they fought with a spirit which seemed to command victory. They routed an equestrian wing, and were prosecuting their advantage with sanguine hopes of general triumph, when the efforts of the infantry so far changed the aspect of affairs, that the Romans and their auxiliaries, if not successful, were not defeated. Stilico claimed the mastery of the field: but Alaric was unwilling to acknowledge the claim; and the Gothic historians<sup>10</sup>, in their extant narratives, support with zeal the pretensions of that prince to the honor of victory.

Whatever might be the opinion of Honorius or the assertions of Stilico on the subject, the field of Pollentia does not appear to have been (as the poets<sup>11</sup> pretend) the scene of a Roman *victory*. Greater credit is due to an ancient chronicle, which attributes nearly an equality of success and of loss, to both armies<sup>12</sup>.

10 Cassiodorus and Jornandes.

11 Claudian and Prudentius,—upon whose authority Gibbon relies.

12 Prosp. Aquitan. Chron.—According to Claudian, another battle soon followed, in which the Goths were routed, though a considerable number escaped with their king. This account derives an accession of credibility from the assertion of Orosius, that Alaric was frequently vanquished.

The retreat of Alaric, at the close of the campaign, encouraged Honorius to celebrate his supposed success by a triumphal procession at Rome : but, in the following year, not considering himself as safe either in that city or at Mi-

A. D. lan, he fixed the seat of government at Ravenna.

403. This was not an imprudent choice ; for, in case of danger, there was an easy escape from that town by sea ; and it was secured, on the land-side, by a deep morass.

While the emperor lurked in this retreat, Italy was endangered by a new invasion. Radagaisus advanced with an army of Suevi and other German nations<sup>13</sup> ; easily

A. D. passed the Alps ; and, not being impeded by the

404. Apennine barrier, appeared on the banks of the Arno. Florence was besieged by the invaders ; but, being resolutely defended, it remained uncaptured when the approach of relief was announced. Stilico, having assembled all the troops that he could collect by menace or persuasion, and being joined by a multitude of Goths and Huns, attacked the besiegers, and greatly diminished their number. He confined the rest to the hills, and encompassed them with works which they could not force. Famine assailed them in this situation ; and they at length submitted to the Roman general. Precluded from the means of escape, Radagaisus trusted to that clemency which he did not experience. Stilico sacrificed him to a spirit of vengeance ; and as many of the prisoners as did not die of that disease which followed the famine, were either enslaved, or incorporated with the victorious army<sup>14</sup>.

A barbarian host, apparently a part of that numerous army which Radagaisus had led from the north and the east of

A. D. Germany, crossed the Rhine into Gaul, after hav-

405. ing lost a great number of men by the hostilities of

<sup>13</sup> His aggregate force amounted to 200,000 men, by the computation of Orosius and Marcellinus : but it does not appear that the *whole* army invaded Italy.

<sup>14</sup> Orosii Hist. lib. vii.—Prosp. et Marcellini Chron.—Zosim. lib. v.



the Franks. The ravages which marked the course of the invaders, were merciless and furious. So few troops had been left by Stilico for the defence of the country (for he chiefly attended to the safety of Italy), that the enemy met with no effectual resistance; nor did the fierce intruders retire, when they had wreaked their vengeance, and loaded themselves with spoil. They resolved to retain the territories which the inhabitants were unable to defend; and, from that time, the Roman authority in Gaul became feeble and inefficient<sup>15</sup>. A. D. 406.

While Gaul was in this miserable state, South-Britain, being also deprived of Roman protection, renounced the authority of Honorius. The provincials made choice of an imperial administrator: but they soon murdered him, and elected another, whom they treated with equal cruelty. The third British emperor (a soldier whose name was Constantine) was not content with the narrow limits assigned to him, but resolved to add a portion of Gaul to his dominions. He met with success in his early attempts; prevailed over the barbarians in various conflicts; and, having also defeated an army which Honorius sent against him, he fixed his court at Arles<sup>16</sup>. Thus was Gaul divided between a British adventurer and German invaders; and thus, by the weakness of the government, and the growing strength of the barbarians, the decline of the western empire was visibly accelerated.

The eastern empire was less agitated; and it had more apparent strength: yet it can scarcely be said to have been governed with greater vigor. The prince who slumbered on the throne died about this time, less May 1, 407. lamented than he would have been, if he had not suffered Eudoxia and her favorites to oppress his subjects. His son Theodosius being too young to act for himself, Anthemius, the most respectable of all the officers of the

<sup>15</sup> Hist. Francorum, à Gregorio Turonensi, lib. ii.—Hieronymi Op.—Oros.

<sup>16</sup> Zosim. lib. vi. sect. 2, 3.—Sozomen. ix. 11.

court of Arcadius, undertook, in concert with the sophist Troilus, the task of administration<sup>17</sup>. Honorius, if he had been an active and spirited prince, would have offered himself to the Constantinopolitan court as the proper guardian of his nephew. He indeed proposed a journey to the East with that view; but he was easily persuaded by Stilico not to insist upon his pretensions; and the division of empire seemed to be more strongly marked by his neglect.

The subtraction of Gaul and South-Britain from the sway of Honorius, was soon followed by the loss of Spain. Constantine sent his son Constans into that country; and, after a short but brisk opposition, which was conducted by Didymus and other relatives of Honorius, the whole peninsula was subdued<sup>18</sup>.

Alaric, while he meditated schemes of towering ambition, offered his friendship to the emperor, and declared himself ready to assist him in the ruin of Constantine. As the price of his late forbearance, and of some alleged services in resisting the encroachments of the eastern court upon West-Illyria, he demanded a considerable sum of money, which Stilico refused to grant without the sanction of a senatorial decree. The conscript fathers, proud of the honor of being consulted, debated the question in form, but suffered themselves to be influenced by the minister to vote for a pecuniary grant, even when the majority were inclined to oppose such a concession.

The correspondence which had long subsisted between Stilico and Alaric furnished a pretence for the minister's disgrace, if it did not form the real cause. Weary of his tyranny, and envying his power, Olympius, whom he had promoted to a high office at court, eagerly caballed against him, and propagated strong suspicions of the dangerous views of that powerful statesman, who (said the intriguing

17 Socrat. lib. vii. cap. 1.

18 Zosim. lib. vi. sect. 4.—Sozomen.

courtier) held his sovereign in bondage, and intended to elevate himself or his son to the imperial dignity. Whether Stilico had already formed this traitorous scheme, is uncertain. Without any criminality of project, he might have been induced to believe, that the interest of the declining state would be promoted by conciliating Alaric, and gratifying him with a portion of authority: but, perhaps, when he found that his artful adversary had so seriously undermined his influence, as to bring him to the verge of ruin, he resolved to take the first opportunity of deposing a prince who no longer favored him.

(Being urged by Olympius to visit the legions at Pavia,) and take advantage of their disgust at the supposed concert between Stilico and the Goths, Honorius disregarded the protest of his alarmed father-in-law against the ominous journey, and presented himself to the troops, as their legitimate leader, who was entitled to their allegiance and their defensive service. Tutors by the rising favorite, the legionaries assaulted many civil and military officers, who were attached to Stilico, and put them to death, as enemies of their country; and, not content with these outrages, they wantonly massacred a great number of the citizens. A detachment was at the same time sent against the obnoxious minister, who, having fled into a church at Ravenna, consented to surrender himself, upon the security of an oath, importing that his detention, and not his death, had been commanded. As soon as he had left his asylum, a written order for his death was exhibited by the officer who headed the party. Some of his Gothic friends and other attendants offered to attempt his rescue; but, apprehending that their efforts would be useless, he calmly submitted to decapitation. His fugitive son was seized at Rome, and murdered by the emissaries of Olympius.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Zosim. lib. v. sect. 36, 39—41, 44.—Oros. vii. 38.—Olympiod. in Photii Biblioth.—Socrus. iv. 4.



Stilico may be considered as one of the props of a feeble and tottering empire. He defended it with vigor and apparent fidelity ; and his treason is problematical. He had undoubted courage, capacity, and address ; and he united the talents of the politician with those of the military commander. But he was frequently rapacious, sometimes unjust and cruel, and usually arbitrary and despotic.

With the connivance, if not by the orders, of a treacherous court, the soldiers, in various towns of Italy, murdered the families of the Gothic warriors in the Roman service, considering them as the friends of Stilico<sup>20</sup>. This barbarity so enraged the auxiliaries, that they urged the king of the Visi-Goths to avenge their cause, and promised to support him with the most strenuous zeal in a war against the Romans. He was already inclined to have recourse to that extremity, unless Honorius would consent to supply his necessities, and gratify his ambition. He, indeed, only demanded a subsidy ; but it might easily be concluded, that a compliance in this respect alone would not satisfy him.

The emperor's new minister was not, like his predecessor, disposed to court the Gothic prince ; nor was he qualified to conduct the war against so able a general. He committed the task of defence to men who were unfit for military command, having neither skill nor experience. His negligence suffered the Goths to pass without opposition from the province of Noricum to the gates of Rome.

Notwithstanding the evident decay of the strength and dignity of the empire, the Roman metropolis was still deemed secure from foreign insult. It was not supposed that even the insolence of a Gothic prince would dare to attack the sacred and venerable city. But the audacity of Alaric was equal to the attempt: he confided in the

<sup>20</sup> Zosim, lib. v. sect. 43.

success of his arms, and did not apprehend that the defence would be so resolute or so obstinate as to baffle his hopes.

The great city was soon subjected to so strict a blockade, that no provisions could be introduced into it. Famine gradually became the dreadful consequence of hostile vigilance; and the destructive fury of disease soon followed. Relief from Ravenna being in vain expected, the effect of negotiation was at length tried. Two citizens of distinction were deputed to the camp of Alaric, requesting peace upon such terms as the Romans might accept without disgrace. His first demand extended to all the valuable property which the city contained: but, when the deputies remonstrated against this too comprehensive requisition, he condescended to grant an armistice, during which the negotiation might be continued or resumed. It was afterward agreed, that the senate and citizens should purchase the friendship of the Goths with 5000 pounds of gold and 30,000 pounds of silver, beside the grant of silken garments and of woollen cloth, and a quantity of pepper. The difficulty of procuring the whole of this supply among the inhabitants, induced the magistrates to pillage the temples, and melt down the golden statues or the silver images of the Gods<sup>21</sup>. Hence it appears, that, notwithstanding the complete establishment of Christianity by Theodosius the Great, some pagan temples had been suffered by him and his son to remain.

The completion of the pecuniary contract, on the part of Honorius, produced the retreat of Alaric and his troops into Tuscany. The peace, however, which ensued, was of very short duration<sup>22</sup>. Hostages had been demanded

<sup>21</sup> Zosimus reprobates this sacrilege, and particularly represents the removal of the figure of Valor or Fortitude, as ominous of the lamentable decline of those qualities among the Romans.

<sup>22</sup> From Sozomen's account, it would seem, that no formal or precise treaty was signed; for he says, that Alaric, having received many presents, raised the siege for a time; and that the Romans promised to persuade the emperor to make peace with him.

by the Gothic king for the pacific and friendly behaviour of the Romans: but the emperor, who had acquiesced also in this article of the convention, declined or delayed it's execution. Alaric, who would otherwise have violated the compact, was not displeased at this neglect; and,

A. D. 408. when 6000 men had been sent for the security of

Rome, he so eagerly attacked them, that only a sixtieth part of the number could escape captivity. Still pretending to wish for peace, he detached a party for the protection of some deputies, who, in the name of the senate, urged Honorius to expedite a complete pacification.

Not being fully pleased with the administration of Olympius, or the conduct of the war, the emperor dismissed that statesman, and put two of his generals to death. Jovius, who now assumed the chief direction of affairs, met Alaric at Ariminum, and, after a negotiatory conference, sent the proposed terms to his sovereign, whom he advised to accept the king as chief commander of the Roman army. Honorius assented to the arrogant requisition of an annual grant of gold and corn, but declared that he would never grant the desired dignity. Alaric, denouncing vengeance, immediately ordered his men to march toward Rome; and, on the other hand, the minister, declaring himself as ready for war as he had lately been eager for peace, concurred with Honorius in an oath which precluded all thoughts of a pacification with Alaric<sup>23</sup>.

After a renewal of his insincere overtures, and a declaration of his willingness to accept one instead of three provinces for a settlement, and to relinquish the demand of legionary authority and of a subsidy, the Gothic invader advanced to the mouth of the Tiber. With little difficulty he gained possession of the port, and seized the copious supplies of corn and other provisions, intended for the benefit of the citizens of Rome. By threatening to with-



hold this stock from their use, he prevailed upon them to comply with his wishes. The intimidated senate granted the imperial dignity to Attalus, who, although he had been appointed governor of Rome by Honorius, promised to co-operate with the determined enemy of that prince. Alaric now obtained that military command which he had solicited: his brother-in-law Athaulphus was promoted to an exalted station; and the Gothic influence was quickly extended over the major part of Italy<sup>24</sup>.

The intelligence of this revolution so terrified Honorius, that, when he had proposed to Attalus an association of authority, and had received, in answer, a mere promise of life as a high indulgence, he meditated an escape to Constantinople: but, being encouraged to remain at Ravenna by the arrival of a long-expected body of veterans from the East, he calmly waited for a report of the state of northern Africa, which his competitor had made preparations to subdue. He was at length gratified with an account of the success of his general, Heraclian, not only over the first army which he encountered, but over a more considerable force; and his interest was also promoted by the interruption of all traffic between Rome and the African ports,—a precaution which reduced the citizens to great distress, and excited a disaffection to the new government<sup>25</sup>.

Exulting in the possession of power, Attalus was desirous of acting in every instance by his own authority, without regard to the inclinations of his Gothic patron. Resenting this conduct, Alaric ceased to favor him; and, expressing a wish for a complete accommodation with Honorius, he publicly degraded Attalus, whom, however, he would neither surrender to his rival, nor personally injure. Exterior arrangements were now made for a negotiation: but, on pretence of the undue influence which

24 Zosim. lib. v. sect. ult. vi. 6.—Olympiod.

25 Sozomen. lib. ix. cap. 8.—Zosim.

had been acquired over the emperor by the Goth Sarus, whom Athaulphus had long viewed with eyes of jealousy and hatred, Alaric declined all renewal of conference, and fiercely resumed hostilities<sup>26</sup>.

The danger and disgrace of barbarian conquest menaced the celebrated city. Advancing with confident hopes, the Gothic prince again subjected Rome to a blockade. The circumstances are variously stated; or it may rather be said, that we have no *detail* of this important enterprise. Whether the defence was short or protracted, is uncertain; for some maintain the former point, while others support the latter affirmation. It is also a doubtful point, whether the city was taken by assault, or gained through the treachery of some base and dastardly inhabitants: but, from the degeneracy of the citizens, and the connexion of many of them with the Goths, it is pro-

Aug. 24, 409. bable that Alaric soon became master of the encompassed metropolis, by a secret negotiation with traitors.

When a great city is surrendered, even by capitulation, to barbarian warriors, many outrages and enormities are perpetrated amidst the exultation of success: but, when it is taken without the adjustment of terms calculated for the security of the vanquished inhabitants, acts of licentiousness and inhumanity may be expected to proceed to the most horrible excess. With the Goths were mingled troops of Huns, beside a multitude of slaves who had deserted the city in the preceding year; and, in all probability, the two last descriptions of besiegers committed greater cruelties than the first. All who fled to the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul, and other sacred edifices, found safety and protection, by the express command of Alaric: but, of the rest of the citizens, many hundreds, perhaps many thousands, were put to the

sword<sup>27</sup>. The city was also pillaged; and public structures and private houses were devoted to the flames: yet it is supposed that the havock was confined to a small part of Rome<sup>28</sup>.

The barbarian prince who thus triumphed, and exposed the weakness of Rome, did not long enjoy his success. He left the city when he had domineered for five days over the depressed inhabitants, and directed his progress to the coast which fronted Sicily, ravaging the country as he proceeded. He now aimed at the conquest of Sicily, and hoped to subjugate northern Africa; but death arrested his career. His abilities seemed to qualify him for acting an important part, both in the field of war and on the political theatre: yet he did not make the most judicious use of his advantages, and was rather a devastator than a conqueror, although his natural ferocity was in some measure softened by his adoption of the Christian faith.

Athaulphus, to whom the Goths readily granted their vacant royalty, was not so ambitious as to aspire to the independent possession of Italy, and not so decidedly hostile to the Romans as to pursue them with implacable animosity. While this prince remained in a state of inaction, Constantine, not content with the dominion which he had so easily acquired, invaded Italy, in consequence of a secret combination with one of the generals employed by Honorius; but, being informed that the emperor had punished the treacherous mal-content with death, he quickly retreated. His son, unable to defend Spain against the exertions of Gerontius, a bold mal-content, and the concurrent efforts of a swarm of German warriors, retired

<sup>27</sup> Hieron. Epist.—Philostorg.—Procop. de Bel. Vand.

<sup>28</sup> Pomponius Lætus affirms, that Alaric burned only a few buildings, and retired with little spoil; adding, that disgrace was entailed upon the city, rather than any great mischief inflicted:—and count Marcellinus, whose authority is preferable, merely says, that the invaders burned *a part of the city*: even this faint expression is thought too strong by Gibbon.



about the same time to Vienne in Gaul. Pursued by the rebels, he was put to death by their leader, who immediately proceeded to Arles to effect the ruin of Constantine.

In this contest, the interest of Honorius was ably supported by Constantius, a citizen of the Illyrian province; who, entering Gaul with a loyal army, drew to his standard the troops of Gerontius, drove that general to suicide, and formed the siege of Arles. A numerous body of German auxiliaries arrived, during the siege, at the invitation of Constantine; but, instead of relieving the garrison and saving the usurper, they were defeated by the imperial warriors; and the rival of Honorius, although he had taken holy orders in the hope of escaping the punishment due to his revolt, and had surrendered on a promise of pardon, was sacrificed to the vengeance of the court.

While the imperial troops were contending with rebels, Spain ceased to be a dependency of Rome. During Constantine's usurpation, numerous bodies of Suevi, Alans, and Vandals, diffused devastation over the western peninsula, which, by the treachery of some and the imbecility of others, they had been suffered to invade. After a series of inhuman outrages, they divided the territorial spoil. The Alans took possession of Lusitania; and many of their tribes colonised the maritime districts to the eastward of Bætica, while that extensive province was seized by the Vandals, who also joined the Suevi in colonising the northern part of Spain. When the work of devastation and massacre had ceased, the remaining inhabitants, with the exception of many of the Galicians, acquiesced in the yoke of the barbarians, which they did not find so grievous or oppressive as they apprehended.

The usurpation of Jovinus was much less protracted

29 Sozomen. lib. ix. cap. 12, 13.—Olympiod. Hist.

30 Olympiod.—Oros.—Idat. 31 Idatii Chron.—Orosii Hist.

than that of Constantine. This rebel was the offspring of a respectable Gallic family ; and he had sufficient influence to extend his sway over a great part of Gaul. Being courted by Athaulphus, who wished to share the province with him, he consented to an alliance; but, when, <sup>A. D.</sup> in opposition to the will of the Gothic prince, he <sup>411.</sup> had associated his brother in the sovereignty, he lost the support of the barbarians, and was exposed to all the dangers of a vigorous siege, in which the troops of the offended Goth co-operated with those of Honorius. Unable to resist with effect, he submitted to the enemy, and was put to death, his brother having previously suffered the same fate.

Another revolt, which at first wore a formidable aspect, was suppressed with great facility. <sup>A. D.</sup> Heracian, <sup>412.</sup> not content with the transient honor of the consulate, assumed the imperial *insignia*, and sailed from Africa to Italy with a large fleet ; but, soon after he had landed, he was attacked on his march, and intimidated into a confused flight. Deserting his army, he returned to Carthage, where the sanctity of a temple, chosen by the fugitive for an asylum, did not secure him from the stroke of death, which the emperor authorised every one of his subjects to inflict. A gift of his property rewarded the merit of Constantius, who continued to serve his prince with zeal, if not with uniform success.

When the Goths were masters of Rome, they seized the person of Placidia, the emperor's sister ; and this princess was detained for some years in captivity, in defiance of all the endeavours of her brother's ministers to procure her liberation. Athaulphus, however, treated his fair prisoner with respect; and her attractions excited in his heart the feelings of love. The offer of matrimony from a barbarian was considered by Honorius as an affront, but was not so offensive to Placidia as to produce, from her pride or disdain, a rejection of his addresses. The marriage was

solemnised at Narbonne : gold and jewels, the spoils of the provinces, were lavished upon the bride by her barbarian lover ; and new overtures were made for a political alliance with the emperor, whose apprehensions were at the same time aroused by the re-investment of Attalus with the ostensible sovereignty. By the advice of Constantius, the proposed treaty was evaded, as useless or disgraceful : but an appearance of amity was preserved ; and Athaulphus, listening to the importunities of his brother-in-law, marched into Spain to attack it's new possessors. He quickly reduced Barcelona ; but, while he resided in that city, he lost his infant son Theo-

A. D. dosius, and was exposed to a murderous assault.

414. One of his dependents, who had previously been in the service of a Gothic chieftain, breathing revenge for the murder of his master, a victim of the barbarous jealousy of Athaulphus, took an opportunity of assassinating the king. Sigeric, who was placed on the throne by a faction, was soon deposed and murdered ; and Wallia became the object of more general choice<sup>32</sup>.

In the mean time, Theodosius, or rather his sister Pulcheria, administered in peace the affairs of the eastern empire. The exemplary piety of that princess did not preclude a zealous attention to political concerns. By her judgement and prudence, occasionally mingled with spirit, she secured the obedience of her brother's subjects. She diminished the burthen of taxation, manifested her liberality to the poor, redressed various grievances, and checked the tyranny of the subordinate agents of power.

The new king of the Goths, having been unsuccessful in an expedition to Africa, accepted overtures of peace from Honorius ; and, receiving a large supply of corn, bound himself to act against the enemies of Rome. He commenced his career by attacking the Si-



lingi in Bætica ; and, when he had nearly exterminated that branch of the Vandals, he turned his arms against the Alans, who, losing their king in the defence of their territories, sought refuge among the Vandals in the northern part of the peninsula. He did not retain the provinces which he conquered, but replaced them under the authority of Rome. In gratitude for this service, Honorius transferred the country of Aquitaine to Wallia, who, dying before he had long governed his new kingdom, was succeeded by Theodoric.

A. D.  
417.

On the retreat of the Goths from Spain, dissensions arose between the Vandals and the Suevi. The former, under Gonderic, so severely harassed the latter, that their king Ermenric fled to the mountains of Biscay ; but this prince, being assisted by the Romans, turned the tide against his adversaries, and drove them into the south of Spain<sup>11</sup>.

A. D.  
418.

Constantius, who eagerly promoted the final success of the Suevian prince, rendered himself so useful to the state, by his courage and abilities, that he was declared conjunct emperor, being already the brother-in-law of Honorius. He did not long survive his promotion ; for he died before the close of the year. Placidia, who had not that affection for him, which would have induced her to receive with joy the offer of his hand, had obeyed her brother's command for a marriage which was less disgraceful than her Gothic alliance ; and, while she treated her husband with respect, she acquired a great influence over him.

A. D.  
420.

From caprice or an undefined motive, Theodosius refused to give his sanction to the elevation of Constantius. He was, at this time, more intent upon a matrimonial connexion, than desirous of securing the favor of his uncle. Athenais, the daughter of a Grecian philosopher,

was recommended by his sister to his notice and regard; and, not being over-awed by his exalted rank, or humbled by a sense of demerit, she readily accepted the offer of an honorable union.

The clangor of arms at length disturbed that tranquillity which the eastern empire had long enjoyed. A fierce persecution of the Christians in the Persian dominions occasioned the flight of many into the Roman provinces; and, when Bahram demanded a surrender of the fugitives, the emperor declared that he would defend them against their pagan tyrant. The ill treatment of traders, and a detention of some of his subjects, who had assisted in working mines of gold, also offended Theodosius; and he was advised by his ministers to have recourse to vigorous measures. Some of the incidents attributed to this war by Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, are either fabulous, or glaringly exaggerated: but it appears, that Ardaburius defeated the Persians in their own country, and baffled their attempts upon his master's territories in Mesopotamia, without being able to prevail over the defenders of Nisibis; that, in the next campaign, the same general, by his success in the field,

A. D. 421. intimidated Bahram into a desire of peace; and that a treaty was consequently concluded, by which the Christian emigrants were gratified with compensation and security<sup>34</sup>.

In the West, a bold attempt was made to ruin or weaken the power of the barbarians. Castinus was the commander whom Honorius employed on that occasion. He, at first, met with such success, that he expected to restore the Roman authority in the peninsula: but, engaging rashly, or being betrayed by the Gothic auxiliaries, he was defeated with great loss. The emperor, who did not keenly feel either this or any other disappointment, for-

<sup>34</sup> Some of the Persian historians, however, affirm, that Bahram imposed his own terms upon the emperor, from whom he exacted a renewal of tribute.

bore to avenge the disgrace. He died in the following year, after an inglorious reign. Weak and indolent, he seemed to have no decided character: <sup>432.</sup> he was therefore, easily governed, and was frequently seduced by his ministers into acts of injustice and oppression.

### LETTER XXVI.

*History of the two Empires, to the Invasion of Italy by Genseric the Vandal.*

THEODOSIUS was not qualified to wield, with <sup>A.D.</sup> due dignity, the sceptre of the East; still less <sup>422.</sup> could he effectually sustain the weight of that more dangerous royalty which was connected with the defence of the West. Being advised, however, to assert his right to the succession of his uncle, he declared himself emperor of Rome, and sent orders for the acknowledgement of his claim; but his absence from Italy, and his known want of vigor, afforded to an ambitious pretender the prospect of a splendid acquisition. John, the secretary of Honorius, being supported in his views by the chief commander of the army, assumed the imperial purple, and immediately called into his service a gallant warrior and an able counsellor, in the person of Aëtius, whom he sent to form a confederacy with the Huns. To a request of aid, the barbarians acceded; but they were not so quick in their movements as the danger of their ally required, although his competitor suffered him to remain above a year unmolested.

The troops of Theodosius reached Dalmatia <sup>A.D.</sup> without opposition; and, while Ardaburius and <sup>424.</sup> the infantry were conveyed into Italy by sea, his son Aspar



conducted the cavalry by land. The former of these generals, driven by a storm upon the coast, fell into the hands of the partisans of John, by whom he was treated with lenity and indulgence, with a view of inducing him to exert his influence over Theodosius, in favor of an association of power. While he seemed to listen to persuasion, he secretly corresponded with Aspar, and desired him to hasten his march to Ravenna. Guided by a peasant through the morasses, the young commander approached the gates of the city; and, easily introducing his troops, surprised the incautious usurper, whom he sent to Aquileia, where Placidia and Valentinian (her son by Constantius) anxiously waited the result of the expedition. Being deemed unworthy of pardon, John was decapitated, before the arrival of his barbarian friends.

When the Huns encountered Aspar, they were unacquainted with the fate of their ally. The fierce conflict was attended with an useless sacrifice of lives; but, this consideration did not, in those times, keenly shock the feelings of mankind. Aëtius, bearing of the death of his unfortunate master, accepted the overtures of Placidia, and, by persuasions and donatives, procured the retreat of the Huns.

That sudden impulse of ambition which had flattered Theodosius with the prospect of being the lord of both empires, soon yielded to sentiments of moderation. He prudently considered his present dominions as sufficiently ample for the gratification of every wish that he could form; and, therefore, resigned his claim in favor of Valentinian, whose sovereignty was readily acknowledged by the Romans and the provincials. Placidia was permitted to assume the regency; but her qualifications for the task of government, in a turbulent age, were not so striking as to be fully admitted by able judges of political merit.

The chief influence over the regent was disputed between Aëtius and count Boniface. The loyal zeal of the latter, who had warmly supported the imperial family against the usurper, gave him a better claim to her favor: but the artful plausibility of the former enabled him to triumph over his rival. He insinuated that the count aimed at independence in Africa, and intended to take the earliest opportunity of renouncing all subjection to the minor prince. He therefore advised, that a mandate of recall should be sent without delay to the ambitious governor; and, at the same time, he addressed to the calumniated general a letter of pretended friendship, exhorting him to disregard the invidious order which his enemies had advised the regent to issue, and to take immediate precautions for his defence and security. Boniface, considering the recall as an evident mark of displeasure, and reflecting on the caprice and ingratitude of courts, resolved to put himself in a menacing posture, and to risque all the consequences of disobedience. Being now declared by the regent a public enemy, he claimed the support of all who were satisfied with his government; and he was thus enabled to withstand and defeat Sinex, who had hoped to crush him with the troops that were sent from Italy: but, when an army of Goths arrived, he could not save either Carthage or Hippo from their grasp. To avoid ruin, he courted the aid of the Vandals of Bætica, who were then subject to the sway of Genseric, an aspiring and politic barbarian. He engaged to transfer to this associate one moiety of the African province; and the offer was readily accepted by the Vandal prince, who, accompanied by troops and colonists, arrived on the African coast, but not before he had inflicted signal chastisement upon the Suevi, for having presumed to invade his territories. A considerable part of the province was soon seized by the strangers, who were not only favored by the sectarian objects of episcopal per-

A. D.

426.

A. D.

427.

secution, but derived occasional aid from many of the Mauritanian tribes<sup>2</sup>.

Alarmed at the progress of the Vandals, some of the officers of Ravenna undertook a voyage to Africa, in the hope of reclaiming Boniface; and, when he had stated the grounds of his revolt, they discovered the base artifice which jealousy and malignity had suggested to Aëtius. The count's return to his duty was the immediate result of this conference: but, with all the efforts of his returning loyalty, he could not dissipate the storm which he had raised, or repress the furious devastations in which the Vandals indulged themselves. His pecuniary offers were rejected by Genseric; and, after a conflict in which he was nearly ruined, he sought protection within the walls of Hippo. He withstood every assault for fourteen months; and the siege was then relinquished, in consequence of the pressure of famine: but the barbarians, far from being discouraged into a retreat from the country, defended themselves with great vigor against the troops both of the eastern and western empires, commanded by Boniface and Aspar, and at length obtained a complete victory<sup>3</sup>.

Aëtius, while his rival was in disgrace, had distinguished himself by his martial exploits. He had defeated the Franks, and had driven them to the eastern side of the Rhine: he had chastised the Goths in Gaul, and had suppressed revolts in Vindelicia and Noricum. But now,

A. D. without regard to the peace or honor of Rome,  
431. he turned his arms against Boniface, who, escaping from the late battle, had returned to Italy. The illegal contest was quickly decided. Aëtius was obliged to quit the field; but he profited by the event of the conflict; for the count was mortally wounded<sup>4</sup>.

Placidia regretted the loss of one of the best Roman

<sup>2</sup> Jornand. de Regnorum Successione, lib. 1.—Procop. de Bel. Vand.—Idatii et Prosp. Chron.

<sup>3</sup> Procop. de Bel. Vand. lib. i.

<sup>4</sup> Marcellini Chron.



generals, at a time when she considered him as fully restored to her service. Aëtius, apprehending the effects of her displeasure, applied for aid to the Hunnic king Rugilas, who then kept his court in Pannonia; and, having easily procured a great military force, he returned to over-awe the regent. As she expressed a willingness to pardon him, he dismissed his auxiliaries, and again declared himself a loyal subject of Valentinian, in whose name he long governed the empire with ability and spirit.

The difficulty of expelling the Vandals from Africa, when the disordered state of Europe required the most vigilant attention, induced the court of Ravenna to agree to a treaty with Genseric, who was permitted to possess the greater part of Numidia, Byzacene, and other territories<sup>5</sup>. This was merely regarded by the barbarian king as a temporary convention; for he was far from being satisfied with the grant, and only waited for an opportunity of extending his acquisitions.

A less disgraceful treaty was concluded with Gondicarius, king of the Burgundians. Having commenced hostilities against the Romans, that prince suffered a sanguinary defeat from the valor of Aëtius, and was constrained to acquiesce in the dictates of the victorious general: and, soon meeting with a new enemy, he lost both his power and his life. An army of Huns invaded his territories, and totally routed his troops<sup>6</sup>.

The ferocious activity of the Huns prompted them to assist the Romans against the Goths in southern Gaul. Theodoric, the Visi-Goth, had formed the siege of Narbonne: but the courage of count Litorius forced a passage through the ranks of the enemy, and seasonably relieved the famished garrison; and Aëtius completed the

<sup>5</sup> Procop. lib. i.—Cassiodori Chron.

<sup>6</sup> Idatii et Cassiodori Chron.

A. D. 456. discomfiture of the besieging force. The war, however, was not terminated by this success; for the Goths continued to resist all the efforts of the allies. Toulouse was at length invested by Etorius, who hoped to signalise the campaign by the capture of the king himself; but he was disappointed by the effect of a

A. D. 458. vigorous sally, and fell into the hands of the prince whom he had marked out for his prey<sup>7</sup>. The great loss sustained in this conflict so far humbled the pride of Aëtius, that he condescended to sue for peace, which Theodoric, as prudent as he was brave, readily granted<sup>8</sup>.

Another incident, which occurred in the same year, detracted from the dignity of the Roman government. Carthage, the most flourishing city in provincial Africa, except Alexandria, was taken by the Vandals, without even the labor of a siege. Genseric made himself master of it by a treacherous surprisal; gave up a part of it's wealth to his followers, and applied to his own use the most valuable spoils; treated the inhabitants with arrogance and cruelty, and annihilated the privileges of the city. In the hope of adding Sicily to his new territories, or perhaps only with views of rapine, he invaded that island with a considerable force; and, after the perpetration of horrible outrages, he retired with ample spoils<sup>9</sup>.

The increasing power of the Vandal king alarmed both the imperial courts; and, as Valentinian could not spare a sufficient force for an African war, Theodosius sent out

A. D. 440. a great armament to chastise the faithless barbarians: but the officers whom he selected for this service did not act with zeal or diligence; and, by lingering in Sicily until they were recalled to oppose the Huns and the Persians, they did more injury to the peaceable subjects of Rome than to the hostile barbarians.

<sup>7</sup> Cassiodori Chron.

<sup>8</sup> Paul. Diacon. lib. xiv.

<sup>9</sup> Idatii et Marcellini Chron.—Paul. Diacon.

Acquiescence was now deemed preferable to hostility; and Genserik, by a new treaty with the western emperor, retained his important acquisitions.

Attila, in conjunction with his brother Bleda, had succeeded his uncle Rugilas in the Hunnic royalty; and both princes, concealing their ambitious views under the mask of moderation, continued the negotiations which were in progress between the late king and Theodosius, who, having disgraced himself by consenting to pay an annual tribute, had encouraged the barbarian prince to become an arrogant master and dictator. A treaty was concluded, highly dishonorable to the eastern emperor, who was obliged to double the annuity, to surrender all fugitives, and to refrain from assisting any nation or community to which the joint kings should be hostile<sup>10</sup>.

Having thus humbled the Constantinopolitan court, the two brothers entered into an alliance with the Vandal king, by whom they were persuaded to pour their myriads into the territories of Theodosius, that the intended expedition to Africa might not be prosecuted. A formidable invasion now ensued. The Huns rushed into Moesia and Thrace, stormed and pillaged the towns, and furiously ravaged the country. A Persian army, in violation of an existing treaty, also invaded the empire; but these hostilities were suddenly terminated by a pacification with each power<sup>11</sup>, to the great joy of Theodosius who A. D. was soon after gratified with the acquisition of a <sup>441.</sup>

part of Armenia, while the rest of that kingdom became an appendage to the Persian monarchy. Two sons of the deceased king, doubtful of their power of retaining their assigned divisions, respectively made, on this occasion, a territorial transfer<sup>12</sup>.

The Huns remained quiet for some years after the treaty; but, while they abstained from war, they did not

10 Excerpt. à Principi libro de Legationibus.

11 Marcellini Chron.

12 Procop.



leave Theodosius or his subjects wholly unmolested. Exactions were multiplied, by the rapacious injustice of the barbarians; and unreasonable demands were urged with the most arrogant importunity<sup>13</sup>.

Aëtius still enjoyed the chief sway in the western empire. He could not prevent Rechila, king of the Suevi, from seising Bætica and other Spanish territories, which the Romans had recovered on the retreat of Genseric; nor did his endeavours to obstruct the establishment of the Franks in Gaul materially impede the progress of Clodion. When he held the consulate with Symmachus,

A. D. 445. he was earnestly desired to send aid to the harassed South-Britons; over whom, before the death of Honorius, the Romans had relinquished all authority. As he gave them merely his good wishes, alleging that the critical state of affairs upon the continent precluded a compliance with their request, they solicited assistance from the Saxons.

Weary of tranquillity, and thirsting for glory and spoil, Attila resolved to shake the eastern empire with a tremendous explosion. By the murder of his brother, he had brought the whole Hunnic nation under his sway<sup>14</sup>; and, having strengthened himself by alliances with the Gepidæ, the Ostro-Goths, and other warlike communities, he over-ran the country from the Danube to the Teisse,

A. D. 446. and ravaged the provinces situated between the Euxine and the Adriatic. Seventy towns are said to have felt, in different degrees, the fury of this storm. Many were totally destroyed; some suffered only a partial injury: all were pillaged; and, as we may readily conclude from the character of the Huns and their usual mode of

<sup>13</sup> Prisc. de Legat.

<sup>14</sup> Gibbon says, that he united the two mighty kingdoms of Germany and Scythia, and subdued Scandinavia; but it does not appear, from the narrative of any accurate historian, that he was master even of one third of Germany, or that he had conquered any part of Scandinavia. The dreams of Jornandes are not entitled to credit.

waging war, lives were wantonly sacrificed, and multitudes of captives were carried off. When an obstinate conflict near the Utis had considerably diminished the number of each army, the invaders routed their adversaries; and, when the latter had retired into the Chersonesus, the barbarians again triumphed: but they did not venture to attack the imperial metropolis, although its fortifications had been greatly injured by an earthquake.

Being unsupported by Aëtius, and dreading farther loss and mischief, Theodosius sued for peace, which A. D. he obtained by assenting to the transfer of a long 447. but narrow district to the southward of the Danube, by submitting to new requisitions of tribute, and by promising to send back all deserters, unconditionally, and without the least delay, to their indignant master. The tameness of the emperor encouraged the barbarian king to importune him with complaints of the detention of fugitives, to send deputies to Constantinople as spies or plunderers, and to dictate his will in multiplied instances. Ostensibly to soothe and conciliate this formidable potentate, Maximin, an eloquent and able statesman, was deputed by Theodosius; while Vigilius, who attended the ambas- A. D. sador as his interpreter, was tutored to act the 448. part of an assassin, or desired to find agents for the treacherous deed. Edecon, one of Attila's officers, privately mentioned his willingness to murder the tyrant, without having the least intention of performing his promise. While the interpreter was exulting in the confident hope of success, the plot was disclosed to the king by Edecon. The offender, being seised and interrogated, was permitted to purchase his pardon; but the eunuch Chrysaphius, who had first proposed the scheme of violence, was marked out for punishment by Attila. The head of this minister was demanded by two envoys, whose peremptory tone of complaint, however, did not intimidate the emperor into compliance. Ambassadors were sent in return; and, as they

were empowered to give largely, and promise liberally, the wrath of Attila was appeased, and a new pacification adjusted<sup>15</sup>.

The Huns faithfully observed the treaty during the short remainder of the life of Theodosius, who, accidentally falling from his horse, died of the bruises which he received, at the age of forty-nine years. His piety <sup>July 28.</sup> <sup>419.</sup> was more conspicuous than his political ability. He was not, by disposition, a determined tyrant; but his connivance at the injustice and violence of his ministers rendered his government extremely oppressive. For one prominent feature of his reign, however, he deserves particular praise. To obviate the complication and confusion of the existing code, he commissioned some able civilians to revise all the laws which were in force, and to form such a perspicuous abstract as might usefully guide the magistrates, and caution the public.

The death of this prince without issue gave rise to a novelty in the history of the imperial succession. Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius, had borne as great a share in the administration as the ambition of the eunuchs would allow her; and the knowledge of her abilities and accomplishments inclined the people to submit without a murmur to her assumption of the sole sovereignty. From this elevation, however, she voluntarily and wisely descended, making choice of a respectable associate, whom she considered as admirably qualified for the exercise of power. Marcian, who had evinced the piety of an orthodox churchman, the wisdom of a senator, and the courage of a warrior, was invited to espouse her, on condition of his abstaining from all personal familiarity. As he wished for power, that he might promote the general welfare, he accepted the offer without the least hesitation, and was immediately invested with the imperial dignity<sup>16</sup>.



Marcian reprobated war, unless the features of justice marked it's aspect. Aware of the martial propensities of Attila, he made dispositions for the defence of the empire, instead of indicating that fear which would have accelerated the approach of an enemy; and, when the stipulated tribute was demanded, he disclaimed the degradation, and merely promised to send presents to the domineering barbarian. Attila, incensed at the contumacy of a prince whom he considered as his vassal, haughtily denounced vengeance against him: but he resolved first to invade the western empire. He had been invited to take that bold step by the princess Honoria, who, having been detected in an intrigue with her chamberlain, had been punished by her mother with a prohibition of marriage and with seclusion from general society. Wanton, resentful, and unprincipled, she offered her hand to the enemy of both emperors, and conjured him to rescue her from confinement and tyranny. He sent ambassadors to her brother Valentinian, demanding a surrender of her person, and claiming, in her right, a moiety of the empire; and, when an incompliant answer had been given, he pretended to be satisfied, coolly dissembling his indignation.

The son of Genseric had espoused one of the daughters of Theodoric; but, being suspected (with seeming injustice) of murderous machinations, she was cruelly mutilated, and sent back to her father's court. The resentment, excited by this gross affront, would have been speedily directed against the Vandals, if their king, by urging the advance of Attila into Gaul, had not warded off the storm. The Hunnic king hastened his preparations; intimating to Valentinian, that he only wished to chastise Theodoric, and at the same time assuring the Gothic prince, that the Romans were the sole objects of his displeasure.

The march of the barbarian monarch was rapid; and great was the terror which his approach diffused. His advanced guard, being stopped near the Rhine by a body of Franks, quickly routed the opposers. The whole army passed the river by a bridge of boats, and, after multiplied massacres and the destruction of many towns, formed the siege of Orleans. All the endeavours of Attila to divide the Romans and the Goths, were baffled by a due sense of the danger which threatened both nations. Aëtius, with zealous diligence, called forth the remaining strength of the empire; and Theodoric, with equal spirit, embodied the force of his realm. They were assisted by the Franks under Meroveus, by the Alans, Burgundians, Saxons, the people of Armorica, and even by Sarmatian tribes: but their royal adversary had brought into the field a far greater number of warriors, consisting (beside the Hunnic swarms) of Gepidæ, Ostro-Goths, Thuringians, Rugians, Marcomanni, and other barbarians. Hearing of their approach, he raised the siege, and retired toward the plains of Chalons, where his cavalry could act without any natural obstruction. He postponed the attack to a late hour, that, if he should be defeated, the vanquished might escape by the favor of night.

The Huns, upon whose boasted valor the chief hopes of Attila rested, encountered the central division, to which Aëtius trusted less than to either of his wings. The temporary effect was such as might have been expected. Appalled by the impetuosity of the Huns, the Franks and other auxiliaries of Rome began to yield to the violent shock; but the Visi-Goths, who formed the right wing, vigorously resisted the Ostro-Goths, and also withstood the Huns, who exultingly flocked from the centre; and the left division, conducted by the Roman general, ably maintained the honor of the empire. The invaders were

at length repelled with extraordinary carnage, but not without a very severe loss on the part of the victors<sup>17</sup>. Theodoric was wounded soon after the commencement of the battle, and trodden to death by the inadvertence of some of his own horsemen : but Torismond, opportunely arriving from another part of the field, supplied his father's place ; and his exertions and example greatly contributed to the fortunate and glorious result of the engagement<sup>18</sup>.

Torismond was desirous of pursuing Attila with vigor, or of besieging him in his camp, as soon as the return of light facilitated a renewal of hostilities ; but Aëtius, apprehending that the Goths, by the ruin of the Huns, might become too powerful for the security and peace of the empire, dissuaded the Visi-Gothic prince from a pursuit which he represented as unnecessary, and exhorted him to return to Toulouse, that he might have an opportunity of counteracting any ambitious views, which his brothers might be disposed to entertain. In consequence of this advice, Attila safely retired into Pannonia with the wreck of his army<sup>19</sup>.

Misfortune and disgrace did not depress the spirit of this intrepid barbarian. He diligently recruited his army,

17 Idatius swells the aggregate loss to 300,000 : Paul the Deacon estimates it at 180,000 ; Jornandes, at 162,000 ; but, if it be reduced to 100,000, the calculation will be less incredible.

18 No authors have given a satisfactory account of this important conflict : and there is one whose negligence may excite surprise : for count Marcellinus, in whose chronicle the most insignificant incidents are stated, has omitted (if we can depend upon Scaliger's edition) all mention of the battle of Châlons. His professed object, indeed, was a chronological narrative of the affairs of the eastern empire : but he has introduced many historical incidents of the great western dynasty, much less memorable than that signal defeat of Attila, in which the oriental state was deeply interested. A similar omission is imputable to Abou'l-faraj, who treats of both empires, in his history of the principal dynasties which successively prevailed from the æra of the patriarchal sway to the times of Moslem tyranny.

19 Jornand. de Rebus Get.—Paul. Diac.



A. D. 451. and advanced to the Alps for the invasion of Italy. His approach being unexpected, he passed the mountainous barrier without opposition, and soon reached Aquileia, which he besieged in the Roman form. When all his efforts had been baffled for three months<sup>20</sup>, he gave directions for a most vigorous assault, which put him in full possession of the city. Massacre and demolition followed this success; and the rage of devastation did not cease before the fierce invaders reached Milan. The king then expressed a wish to proceed to Rome; but, when it was hinted that such a visit might be inauspicious, as Alaric, being removed from the world soon after he had victoriously entered that city, might be supposed to have offended the Gods, the Hun seriously deliberated before he would risque the fate of the Goth. Near Mantua, he received a deputation from the emperor, proposing peace. Pope Leo accompanied the envoys, and contributed by his eloquence to divert the fluctuating mind of Attila from the idea of an expedition to Rome. An accommodation was adjusted with Valentinian, who was willing to purchase forbearance by an annual tribute. Aëtius had in some measure quickened the assent of Attila to a treaty, by defeating a body of Huns, with the aid of a reinforcement sent by Marcian.

Having in vain renewed his application for the person of Honoria and her territorial dowry, the Hunnic king would soon have resumed a hostile attitude, if death had not frustrated his turbulent and mischievous schemes.

A. D. 452. After a debauch, he had retired to rest with a new wife; and he was found dead in the morning. He had burst a blood-vessel, and died for want of speedy relief<sup>21</sup>. The importance of his character appeared in the

<sup>20</sup> Paul the Deacon says three years—*continuo triennio*; but this assertion is refuted by the established chronology of the rest of Attila's life.

<sup>21</sup> Jornand.—Paul. Diac.

result of his death. That fabric of power which he had apparently cemented was quickly dissolved, or divided among various claimants and adventurers.

The two commanders whose efforts principally occasioned the ruin of Attila's proud hopes and ambitious projects, did not long survive their antagonist. Torismond was assassinated by his brother Theodoric, who eagerly wished to supplant him; and Aëtius was stabbed A. D. 453. by an ungrateful prince, whose empire he had supported and preserved<sup>22</sup>.

The power and influence of the minister seemed, in the opinion of the eunuch Heraclius and other sycophants of the court, to annihilate or overwhelm the dignity of the emperor himself. Taking advantage of his connexions with the barbarians, his occasional arrogance, and his eager desire of ripening into a complete marriage the betrothal of his son to the princess Eudoxia, the artful courtiers insinuated that he aimed at the imperial dignity<sup>23</sup>. The senator Maximus, deeply resenting an affront which he had received from Valentinian, by whom his wife had been entrapped and debauched—and either thinking that he could not punish the violator of his honor while Aëtius lived to protect him, or wishing to render the prince so odious to his subjects, by urging him to a flagitious act, that it might be easy to dethrone him,—promoted, by secret persuasion, the views of the unprincipled courtiers<sup>24</sup>.

The murderous violence of Valentinian was considered as almost equivalent to an act of suicide. He had destroyed, it was said, the prop of his throne, and, therefore, no longer deserved popular support. He was now exposed, without compassion or regret, to the resentment of Maximus; and, while he was intent upon public diversions, he

<sup>22</sup> Cassiodori Chron.—Theophan.

<sup>23</sup> Greg. Turon.

<sup>24</sup> Jornand, de Regnorum Successione.—Procop. de Bel. Vand.

March 17, was murdered by two of the military friends of <sup>to 454</sup> Aëtius, whom the senator had easily drawn into his views<sup>25</sup>.

Maximus soon proved, that he had not been stimulated to this treasonable act by revenge alone, but was also impelled by motives of ambition. He wished to fill the throne of the Cæsars; and his dependents and emissaries so forcibly recommended him to the senate and people, that he was proclaimed emperor with general consent.

Marcian did not think himself bound, either by zeal for the cause of injured royalty, or by that regard which was due to the relative of his imperial patroness, to take vengeance for the recent murder. Suffering Maximus to reign unmolested, he continued to attend with diligence to the duties of his station. While he preserved internal order, he sustained the external dignity of the empire. He repressed, by his lieutenants, the incursions of the Parthians upon the frontiers; checked the encroachments of the Vandals in Africa; and repelled the attacks of the Ethiopian tribes upon southern Egypt<sup>26</sup>.

The new emperor of the West soon found, that he had not secured happiness by the possession of power. He was aware of the dangers which surrounded him, and wished for an opportunity of escaping into the comparative security of private life. While he anxiously revolved in his mind the difficulties of his situation, he supplied the place of his deceased wife by compelling Eudoxia, the offspring of Theodosius and widow of Valentinian, to accept an offer of marriage. To his son, at the same time, he gave the reluctant hand of the daughter of his murdered sovereign. The offended and resentful empress resolved to shake off the conjugal yoke by stimulating Genseric to attack her hated husband, whose treasonable criminality she represented in the most striking colors.

<sup>25</sup> Cassiod. et Idat. Chron.—Jornand.

<sup>26</sup> Jornand. de Regnorum Success.



The Vandal king, expecting, from the intelligence which he at the same time received of the defenceless state of Italy, that even Rome itself would fall an easy prey, equipped an armament with alacrity, and directed his course to the entrance of the Tiber. His appearance was the signal of ruin to Maximus. In endeavouring to secure himself by flight, he was stopped, assaulted, and murdered, in the third month of his reign<sup>27</sup>.

Amidst the terror and confusion which followed the death of Maximus, the Vandals and their Mauritanian associates took possession of Rome without the least difficulty. At the earnest request of pope Leo, Genseric declared that no sanguinary violence should be offered to the inhabitants, and no part of the city should be consigned to the flames. As he did not by these promises preclude himself or his followers from the seizure of persons and of property, the invaders passed fourteen days at Rome in acts of rapine. The valuable contents of every public building, whether used for civil or religious purposes, and all the portable wealth of private citizens, were removed by the barbarians to their vessels; and throngs of captives were compelled to serve the insulting foe. Among these were Eudoxia and her two daughters, whose release could not be procured by all the solicitations of Marcian<sup>28</sup>. Satisfied with the ample spoils which had been so easily obtained, Genseric was not disposed to retain the imperial city. As none presumed to resist him, he might have placed a new emperor upon the throne; but, affecting a spirit of moderation, he left Rome under the authority of the senate, and returned with his army to Africa.

<sup>27</sup> Procop. lib. i.—Evag. lib. ii.—Jornand.—Theophan.

<sup>28</sup> Jornand.—Procop.—Paul. Diac.

## LETTER XXVII.

*History of the Governments of ROME and CONSTANTINOPLE, to  
the Expulsion of Nepos.*

A. D. 454. THE repetition of Roman disgrace exposed to the world the miserable weakness of the empire, and seemed to prognosticate it's ruin. At this crisis, however, it derived some degree of strength from the promised support of Theodoric, by whose encouragement Avitus was tempted to assume the sovereignty. This adventurer, who was of Gallic descent, had been appointed to the chief military command in his native province; and, as no other candidate for the vacant dignity appeared, he was proclaimed emperor at Arles by the troops and the provincials. The senate and citizens of Rome would have preferred a claimant of more illustrious birth: but they did not refuse to submit to the sway of the aspiring general; nor did Marcian decline the acknowledgement of his title.

Avitus did not distinguish his reign, either by the exercise of political ability, or by the display of military skill and prowess. He passed his time in ease and indolence, and neither invited affection nor secured respect. While he gratified his luxurious propensities, his authority in Spain was maintained by his Gothic ally, who, being informed of an irruption of the Suevi into those territories which were still under the jurisdiction of Rome, led a great

A. D. 455. army into the peninsula. Rechiarius, by his aggression, eventually promoted the interest of the Goths, by whom he was vanquished, and deliberately put to death<sup>1</sup>.

While the victorious prince was prosecuting his success, the power of Avitus was seriously endangered by the influence of Ricomer (grandson of Wallia), a distinguished commander in the Roman service, who, returning in triumph from a maritime expedition, in which he had defeated the navy of Genseric, took advantage of the general contempt excited by the emperor's conduct, and procured from the senate a vote of dethronement. Whether the deposed prince died of disease or by violence, is uncertain. It was reported that he died in his flight to a Gallic sanctuary; but, as an order for his capital punishment followed the vote of deposition, it is probable that the course of nature was forcibly accelerated.

Ricomer, without assuming the imperial title, kept the machine of government in motion: but, when he had governed for some months, he condescended to promote the election of his friend Majorian, whose private character was estimable, and whose abilities, both political and military, were undisputed.

A new emperor, about the same time, began to reign at Constantinople. Marcian being removed from the world either by the treason of conspirators<sup>2</sup>, or by a natural death<sup>3</sup>, Leo, an officer of Thracian origin, was elevated to the supreme dignity by the interest of Aspar, whose success in the dethronement of the usurper John had concurred with his father's merit and services to raise him to high distinction and pre-eminence.

The war in Spain was prolonged by the spirit of the Suevi, who were unwilling to submit to the Gothic sway. A part of their nation conferred the royal dignity upon Maldra; another portion of the community made choice of Frantan; while many of their tribes submitted to Theodoric. The death of an obscure rival left the chief authority in the hands of Maldra, who agreed to a treaty with

<sup>2</sup> Paul. Diac. lib. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Jornand. de Regnorum Success.—Marcellini et Cassiodori Chron.



the Romans, but did not long adhere to his stipulations. The Goths continued to extend their territories in the peninsula; and their king, at the same time, ventured to

A. D. 458. invade the imperial territories in Gaul; but he was chastised for his presumption by the valor of Majorian, who, having triumphed over him with sanguinary effect, humbled him into a desire of peace and a renewal of alliance<sup>4</sup>.

The emperor was also involved in a war with the Vandals. They knew that he wished to expel them from Africa, and, therefore, resolved to harass him by predatory descents. A strong body of those barbarians, being encountered near the Campanian coast, suffered severely for their intrusion; but the Vandals were less unfortunate in their next enterprise. They attacked a Roman fleet on the coast of Spain; and, being favored by the treachery of some of the officers, they obtained such a victory as enabled Genseric to procure a pacification, which Majorian had previously refused to grant<sup>5</sup>.

That regard for justice and virtue which prompted the emperor to explode abuses and corruptions, did not secure the attachment of the courtiers or the good-will of Ricomer, who, finding him too spirited to submit to irregular control, resolved to annihilate his authority. The ambitious traitor, having inveigled his unsuspecting sovereign into his power, enforced a resignation of that dignity which his influence had procured, but which Majorian had not forfeited by tyranny or misconduct; and, not content with this insult, he hired emissaries to murder the deposed prince<sup>6</sup>.

Severus, an obscure Lucanian, whose weakness of character promised subserviency to the author of his elevation, was chosen by Ricomer to succeed Majorian. He

4 Idatii Chron. 5 Procop. de Bel. Vand. lib. i.—Idat.

6 Jornand. de Rebus Geticis.—Idatii et Cassiodori Chron.

ostensibly reigned above three years, while Ricomer possessed the actual sovereignty. Leo, who continued to reign in the East, did not give his sanction to the nomination of Severus, although the election of both princes, as joint consuls, seemed to argue a concurrence.

Both emperors were embroiled with the barbarians. The Ostro-Goths, settled by Marcian in Pannonia, were so incensed at the subtraction of their annual allowance, that they invaded the territories of Leo, and committed furious ravages. Anthemius marched against them with a firm countenance, and enforced their retreat into the ceded province; and a new treaty of alliance was concluded. In violation of the compact adjusted with Majorian, the Vandals made descents in Italy, and took possession of Sardinia; and their hostile visits were repeated with alarming frequency. The power of Ricomer was also endangered by provincial insurrections. Ægidius, who had the chief command in those Gallic territories which the Romans retained, not only refused to recognise the authority of Severus, but threatened to attempt the rescue of Italy from the tyranny of Ricomer. The ruler of the West, however, by involving him in a war with the Visi-Goths and Burgundians, checked his advance, and confined him to Gaul. Marcellinus, who had governed Sicily with ability, erected in Dalmatia the standard of independence, and maintained his power against all the remonstrances and efforts of Ricomer. He bound himself to strict forbearance with regard to Italy, when Leo had consented to acknowledge him as master of the province which he ruled<sup>7</sup>.

While the Goths contended with Ægidius, whose skill and valor they experienced in a conflict near the Loire, their countrymen made great progress in Spain, confining the Suevi to the northern part of the country, and also

<sup>7</sup> Idat. Chron.—Prisc. de Legat.

making considerable defalcations from the Roman territories: but, not being able to accomplish the subjugation of their Germanic adversaries, they agreed to a pacification with Remismoud, the reigning prince.

An invasion of northern Italy, by the Alans, alarmed the provincials, and called forth all the courage of Ricomer. Beorgor, the bold chieftain who led the intruders to action, suffered for his temerity, being vanquished and slain by the legionaries. The success of the general so far strengthened his interest, that, when he had removed Se-

A. D. verus by poison, or had lost him in the ordinary  
463. course of mortality, he was suffered to rule the state for almost two years, without the election of an ostensible emperor. But the danger to which Italy was exposed by a continuance of Vandal hostilities, induced

A. D. Ricomer to implore the assistance of Leo, by  
466. whose recommendation Anthemius was placed on the throne of the Cæsars<sup>8</sup>.

The new emperor was the offspring of a noble family, and had augmented, by a marriage with the daughter of Marcian, the influence which he derived from wealth and dignity. With a view of securing the attachment of Ricomer, he gave the hand of his daughter to that powerful citizen, in whose loyalty, however, little confidence could be reposed.

Genseric, disgusted at the elevation of Anthemius, whose pretensions, he thought, were far from being equal to those of Olybrius, the husband of Valentinian's daughter Placidia, testified his resentment by an invasion of the Peloponnesus, and by descents upon some of the Grecian islands. For the chastisement of this arrogant barbarian, Leo equipped a more numerous fleet than the Romans had

A. D. ever before seen issuing from their harbours; but  
467. the expedition was rendered unsuccessful by the



injudicious choice of a commander, if not by treachery. His brother-in-law Basiliscus conducted the armament to the African coast, and commenced hostilities near Carthage ; and, when Marcellinus had expelled the enemy from Sardinia, and Heraclius had attacked with success the Libyan possessions of Genseric, a prospect of complete triumph arose. A rapid march to Carthage might have restored the Roman power in that part of Africa : but Basiliscus was indolent and tardy, and was either duped or bribed by the Vandal king into the concession of an armistice. During this respite, Genseric, favored by a change of the wind, sent a number of barks, provided with the means of inflammability, into the midst of the imperial fleet ; and, when this *manœuvre* had made great havoc in the night, he ordered a general attack in the morning. An officer, named John, endeavoured to supply, by his extraordinary exertions, the deficiency of an able commander ; and, when he found that he could not prevail over the hostile fleet, he disdained that safety which an admiring enemy offered to him, and rushed amidst the overwhelming waves. Basiliscus hastened to Sicily with less than a moiety of the fleet and army : Heraclius cautiously retreated ; and Marcellinus, who was ready to proceed to Africa, was murdered by an officer, whom Ricomer had probably instigated to the treacherous act 9.

Neither Gaul nor Spain remained long in a state of tranquillity. After the death of Ægidius, whose son Syagrius held a small sovereignty in defiance of the Franks, the Burgundians encroached upon the feeble remains of the Roman possessions ; and other barbarian communities found an opportunity of enlarging their establishments ; while Euric, who had obtained the Visi-Gothic royalty by the murder of his brother Theodoric, augmented his power by various conquests both in Gaul and in Spain.

9 Procop. lib. i.—Theoph.

Anthemius was still permitted by Ricomer to retain an appearance of authority. Two attempts were made (or rather two conspiracies were formed) for his dethronement. One of the offenders suffered death for his treason; but the other delinquent was merely banished<sup>10</sup>. Leo, thinking that he was equally endangered by the power and

A. D. 470. presumption of Aspar, doomed to death that general and his son Ardaburius, without proof of treasonable guilt; and the fatal mandate was easily executed by the eunuchs of the court<sup>11</sup>. The interest and influence of those officers would have been more formidable to their sovereign, if they had not been infected with Arianism. The Gothic mercenaries, eager to revenge the death of an esteemed commander, rushed into outrageous violence at Constantinople; and, when they had been obliged by the efforts of Zeno the Isaurian (the emperor's son-in-law) to retire from the city, they seized several towns in Thrace, and were not pacified before they had exacted a promise of pecuniary gratification, and procured the appointment of such a general as they approved.

The fate of Aspar alarmed Ricomer, who was apprehensive of similar treatment from the rising spirit of Anthemius. He resolved to anticipate the supposed views of this prince; and, with an army composed chiefly of barbarians, ventured to form the siege of Rome. The majority of the citizens were more inclined to support the endangered emperor, than to abet the treasonable violence of a subject who wished to be a dictator. For three months, they were subjected to the miseries of a siege. Famine and pestilence were added to the fierceness of hostility; and, even when long-expected succours had arrived from Gaul, the hopes of the loyal inhabitants were frustrated by the vigor of Ricomer, who, overpowering all resistance, suffered his followers to perpetrate a series of outrages in

the declining seat of imperial power. Anthemius was murdered by the domineering victor, who com- July 11,  
pelled the senate to acquiesce in the election of 471.  
Olybrius<sup>12</sup>.

While Ricomer was indulging himself with the prospect of continued power, his death filled the empire with joy. Olybrius did not long survive him ; and Glycerius, who had been recently raised from obscurity to a post of honor and emolument, was promoted, by the troops stationed at Ravenna, to the imperial dignity. In opposition A. D.  
to this intruder, Nepos, who was connected with 472.  
Leo by affinity, was proclaimed sovereign of the West ; and his appearance in Italy, with a considerable A. D.  
army, transferred Glycerius from the throne to a 473.  
bishopric.

The death of Leo furnished Zeno with an opportunity of gratifying his ambition. He was a brutal barbarian, unworthy of the notice or regard of an enlightened nation ; but he enjoyed the favor of the widowed empress ; and, having formed a strong party in the state, he was authorised to act as the associate of his son, the younger Leo. The minor prince dying in the very year of his accession to the throne, his father was the sole emperor, until he was driven into exile by the efforts of conspiring malcontents. He recovered his authority in the sequel, and tyrannised for many years.

The small remains of the western empire were soon wrested from the feeble grasp of Nepos. He had conferred the military command in his Gallic territories upon Orestes, who, wishing to make his son a prince, revolted from the emperor, and terrified him into a speedy A. D.  
retreat. Romulus Augustus<sup>13</sup> was immediately 474.  
raised to the supreme dignity.

<sup>12</sup> Paul. Diac.—Cassiod. et Marcel. Chron.

<sup>13</sup> Also called (perhaps in contempt) *Augustulus*.



## LETTER XXVIII.

*Conclusion of the Political and Military History of ANCIENT  
EUROPE.*

THE various causes, which had gradually tended to the subversion of the empire, now operated with an alarming plenitude of effect. For the illustration of that memorable decline, which led to the extinction of such a mass of long-cemented power, some retrospective remarks, my dear son, may be expedient.

During the reign of Augustus, Rome was in the meridian of her power and glory. She soared beyond all rivalry in arms: she had extended her empire, in every direction, over distant and flourishing regions: her skill in the arts approximated to the excellence of her Grecian instructors: her policy and wisdom were the objects of general praise and admiration. But, having reached this envied height, she from that time gradually declined; and inordinate luxury was the primary cause of her decay.

Tiberius was not destitute of ability or of judgement; but he was neither a friend of his country, nor a zealous encourager of those pursuits which render a nation prosperous and happy. He pretended, for a time, to promote both the honor and interest of Rome, to give vigor to every useful art, and encourage laudable emulation in every object that could call forth the active powers of the citizens. But, as his professions were not sincere, his endeavours were not effective. From the senseless and brutal Caligula still less could be expected in the career of patriotism or of good government; and the imbecile Claudius was not such a prince as could check an incipient decline in arts, in manners, or in arms. Under the sway of the profligate Nero, the manners of the people became more depraved than they had been at any other

time subsequent to the decease of Augustus. Vespasian, in his endeavours to produce a reform, met with some success; the permanence of which, however, the infamous example of Domitian tended to preclude. Trajan, while he retrieved the military honor of Rome, was not equally intent upon the correction of luxurious habits. Hadrian's civil regulations were prudent and judicious; but his mean jealousy tended to discourage the fine arts, in which he pretended to excel: yet some admirable specimens of skill and taste belong to his reign. The pious Antonine, and his philosophic successor, checked the course of degeneracy and depravity: but the turpitude and vices of Commodus led to a relapse. Severus would have obtained a greater reputation for political ability, if he had not studiously encouraged and aggrandised the prætorians and other branches of the army, so as to leave the empire at their mercy. While they were thus favored, and at the same time dreaded, they became, from a neglect of discipline, less formidable to the enemies of Rome. Caracalla, in this respect, followed his father's example; and he, at the same time, diminished the dignity and impaired the nationality of the Romans, by extending, to all the subjects of the empire, the privileges of citizens. He was not prompted to this seeming concession by views of liberality, but by a desire of establishing an uniformity of taxation. Under the government of Alexander Severus, military discipline was in some measure restored, and a greater degree of attention was paid to morals: but, in the subsequent commotions of the empire, this pleasing prospect was obscured. When the nation seemed almost incapable of defending itself against the growing strength of the barbarians, some able and spirited princes warded off the storm, and secured the respect of foreign powers, if they did not wholly retrieve the commanding dignity of the nation. At length Constantine arose, whose government was highly important, both in religious and political points of view.



Whether the establishment of Christianity, in the reign of this prince, accelerated or retarded the decline of the empire, is a question which has divided historical critics. The introduction of such a religion may be supposed to have made a favorable change in the manners of the people: it undoubtedly tended to allay their ferocity, and to improve their morals: but the contentious spirit which gradually arose among the different sects of Christians, obstructed the general efficacy of the new system, and delayed it's beneficial effects. Doctrinal and ceremonial points received a greater share of attention than the more important objects of moral purity and practical utility. Dissensions, apparently trivial, excited bitter animosity; and, amidst the disputes of pious zeal, national honor and public virtue were deemed secondary objects of concern.

That systematic oppression to which the subjects of Rome were exposed in the later reigns, in point of taxation and in other respects, concurred to hasten the decline of the state, by indisposing the people for the cordial support of the government, and by changing the zeal of patriotism into the laxity of indifference. They had not those strong motives which, amidst the blessings of equitable administration, would have stimulated the exertions of grateful citizens. They were ready to submit even to barbarians, rather than wield the weapons of defence: but, in the event of such disgrace, they derived some consolation from the hope of finding, that the intercourse of their eventual conquerors with the citizens and provincials (for, during several reigns, many barbarous tribes had been introduced among the imperial troops), had so far propagated the advantages of civilisation, as to render the remaining ferocity of the strangers less formidable.

The visible weakness of the empire encouraged those barbarians who were ostensibly in the Roman service, and who were stationed in Italy, to attempt a revolution. As a bold and able leader was requisite for the accomplish-



ment of their views, Odoacer was selected for the conduct of an enterprise, which, though not apparently very difficult, would necessarily be attended with danger. He was the son of Edecon, who had been employed as the ambassador of Attila to the younger Theodosius. He had served with reputation in the imperial guard, and readily accepted that testimony of high confidence which he considered as due to his courage and talents. When the associated barbarians<sup>1</sup> had demanded a third part of the lands of Italy, and had been answered with a refusal, Odoacer led them against Orestes, who governed in the name of his son. All the troops that could be hastily collected to meet the storm, were insufficient for the defence of the empire; and such a panic seised them, that they fled with their commander to Pavia. The fortifications of this city, if properly manned, were capable of long withstanding the efforts of an enemy: but, amidst a despair of succour, all the persuasions of Orestes could not animate the garrison to a resolute defence. A fierce assault shortened the labors of the besiegers, who forced their way into the town with transports of joy. Sanguinary outrage marked their triumph. Their leader was not particularly remarkable for cruelty; but he did not check their fury with authoritative firmness. When the sword had destroyed a considerable part of the population, the revolvers gratified their avidity with copious spoils, and brutally set fire to the town. Orestes was not so fortunate as to escape: he was conducted to Placentia, and decapitated. His brother Paul being seised with the emperor at Ravenna, the unoffending youth was deposed and pensioned; but his uncle was put to death. In the progress of Odoacer to the southward, other acts of violence were perpetrated, and towns were wantonly demolished<sup>2</sup>. Having received the submission of the inha-

Sept. 4.

475.

<sup>1</sup> Consisting of Heruli, Turcilingi, Scyri, and other tribes, partly of Sarmatian, and partly of Scythian origin.

<sup>2</sup> Paul. Dia.

bitants of Rome, he began to act as king of Italy, without assuming the *insignia* or the external symbols of royalty.

Such was the fall of the western empire. As it's decline had been gradual, it's dissolution was easy. Entangled in the net which the barbarians had long been preparing, it was precluded from all the means of rescue, and from all sources of relief. It had lost the power of effectual resistance; and, having scarcely any remains of ancient vigor, it yielded to the impetuosity of the overwhelming torrent.

The new government, however disgraceful it might seem to the few citizens who retained a sense of Roman honor and dignity, was not so oppressive as many supposed that it would have been. Odoacer testified some regard for existing institutions; and his yoke was not, in general, more grievous than the burthen of the late political system.

While this able adventurer filled the throne of Italy, Gaul was divided among barbarian princes. The Franks were governed by Childeric, whose territories extended from the British channel to the Loire (excluding *Armorica* or *Bretagne*), and reached the vicinity of the Maes and the Moselle. The country, from the borders of Champagne to the heart of Savoy, and also a part of southern Gaul, had been for some time occupied by the Burgundians, whose government, like that which the Franks had erected, was a limited monarchy. From the Loire to the Pyrenean mountains, the authority of the Visi-Goths prevailed. They were, at the same time, masters of the greater part of the western peninsula. The supremacy of Euric, who possessed both courage and ability, seems likewise to have been acknowledged by the Suevians; with whose internal polity, however, he did not interfere.

With regard to the state of Germany, it does not appear that any one of it's provinces remained in suberviency to the rulers of Italy. Only a small part of that

extensive country, indeed, had been regularly provincialized: and even that part was, at this time, apparently subject to the authority of barbarian princes.

In Poland and Russia, the Sarmatians had a variety of principalities or governments, with whose early state we are unacquainted. Lithuania was chiefly occupied by the Fins, who had also more distant settlements to the northward. In Scandinavia, the Goths predominated; and various bodies of those barbarians, long before this period, had formed settlements in the northern parts of Britain, whence they occasionally advanced to the southward, to harass and plunder the provincials of the island. The latter, being left to their fate by the Romans, found themselves so incapable of vigorous defence, that they invited aid from the Saxon rovers, who, substituting enmity for alliance, attacked the feeble and dejected islanders, and reduced them to a state of ignominious servitude.

The eastern empire, in the mean time, exhibited an imposing aspect of dignity, and, amidst factious dissensions, retained a sufficiency of strength to repel or over-awe the barbarians. It still comprehended extensive and flourishing provinces, both in Europe and Asia; and, while barbarism overshadowed the west, its subjects were comparatively enlightened.

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## LETTER XXIX.

### *A Survey of the Origin and Progress of CHRISTIANITY.*

WHEN the coarse mantle of the heathen priesthood had, for a series of ages, shrouded the Roman world, a new scene was opened to view. The darkness of paganism gave way to the light of Christianity. A pure religion



was introduced by the divine favor, and recommended to a sinful world, as a desirable substitute for the gross idolatry of the gentiles and the romantic absurdities of mythology. It is unnecessary to enter into a detail of what you learned in your early years, with respect to the birth of Christ, his supernatural endowments, his exemplary virtues, the course of his ministry, his sufferings from Jewish intolerance, and his ignominious death, which was intended as a propitiation for the iniquities and wickedness of mankind. That system which he taught, was first inculcated in Judæa, whence it was propagated, by his apostles and their disciples, over other provinces of the Roman empire, with a zeal which defied danger, and a spirit which exulted in the tortures of martyrdom. After the disappearance of Christ from the world<sup>1</sup>, Paul, formerly a Jewish bigot, was admitted among the apostles, and distinguished himself by his indefatigable activity in the predication of the Gospel and the conversion of the gentiles or pagans; while St. Peter more particularly exerted his endeavours for the instruction of the Jews in the new faith.

The first Christian assembly was formed at Jerusalem. It was under the government, not of the apostles alone, but also of presbyters and deacons; and the people, or the inferior members of the church, appear to have had, at first, some share of authority<sup>2</sup>. Other congregations

<sup>1</sup> This great event is referred to the 36th year of the Christian æra. The birth of the same divine personage is supposed to have occurred in the 749th year of Rome, when Augustus and Cornelius Sylla were consuls: but the æra from which we reckon did not commence before the 754th year of Rome, when the consular magistrates were Caius Cæsar and Æmilius Paulus.

<sup>2</sup> In an Appendix to the last edition of Dr. Maclaine's translation of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Dr. Gleig has controverted the assertion of the celebrated author, importing that the people or the multitude enjoyed the supreme authority over the church. They did not, perhaps, possess that paramount authority which some have ascribed to them; but it clearly appears, from a passage in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. vi. ver. 3), that they were not so insignificant or powerless as the Scottish divine imagines them to have been. "Look ye out among you (said the apostles to the multitude of the disci-

were soon formed on the same basis; and the new religion began to flourish, without any encouragement from the ruling powers.

Five secondary causes are assigned, by an able but sceptical writer, for the rapid growth of the Christian church; namely, the inflexible zeal of the professors, the doctrine of a future state, reputed miraculous powers, the pure morals of the Christians, and the union and discipline of the ecclesiastical republic. Much may be allowed to these causes; and they would have been less arraigned or disputed by the orthodox, if the mention of them had not been accompanied with profane sneers and invidious reflexions.

At what time, by which of the apostles, or by what professor of Christianity, that faith was first communicated to the citizens of Rome, we are not informed; but it is probable that a Christian congregation was formed in the imperial metropolis, before the death of Tiberius. The pagans not feeling any alarm at the tranquil progress of the new religion, the number of converts continued to increase: but, when the zeal of the preachers or of their disciples had been evinced without the usual guard of discretion and prudence, Claudius banished them from the city<sup>1</sup>. His successor Nero, in the wantonness of cruelty, not only thinned the number of his pagan subjects, but put a multitude of Christians to death, on pretence of their hostility to the established religion. The five subsequent emperors suffered the votaries of the Gospel to remain unmolested, in compliance with the tol-

"ples) seven men of honest report, whom we may appoint over this business". 2. [the cure of the poor]. The twelve, he says, had the authoritative appointment; 4 but it ought to be observed, that the whole multitude (ver. 5) chose the seven administrators. If the apostles, indeed, confirmed the election by imposition of hands, it does not follow that they considered the right of choice as confined to themselves.

3. Sueton. Vit. Claud.—When this writer speaks of the Jews, as the object of the edict, he appears to mean those who had been converted to Christianity, and

rating spirit of paganism. Domitian was less acquiescent ; and his sanguinary rage vented itself on the inoffensive followers of Christ. Even the moderation of Trajan did not wholly spare those pious subjects of the empire, who dared to look on paganism with an unfavorable eye. Hadrian was also a persecutor of the Christians ; and, by Marcus Aurelius, they were at first treated with cruelty, but afterward with mildness. Commodus, from caprice, rather than from respect to a church which had not been sanctioned by the imperial authority, favored the progress of those who were destined to subvert the polytheism of Rome. Severus became, in effect, a persecutor, by conniving at the intolerance of his minister Plautianus. Maximin was a more determined enemy of the Christians, whom Decius also cruelly harassed : and they met with a still more inhuman foe in the malignant and cool-blooded tyrant Diocletian. While Constantius Chlorus patronised them in his division of the empire, Galerius persecuted them with horrible barbarity ; and Maxentius, stimulated both by pagan bigotry and by an intractable ferocity of disposition, exercised against them the most diabolical tyranny.

The sun of prosperity at length shone upon the dispersed Christian fraternities ; and they received that legal protection, and that regular establishment, to which they were fully entitled. Constantine, inheriting his father's regard for the church of Christ, resolved to impart to it all the authority and influence which it could derive from power and prerogative. He commenced his career of religious policy with an edict of toleration, which, by extinguishing the fury of persecution, filled the hearts of the Christians with joy and gratitude. As he was not then sole emperor, the effect of his good intentions did not fully appear ; for his views were checked by Licinius and the second Maximin : but, when he reigned without a rival, he promoted, over the whole extent of the Rom. a



dominions, the prevalence of that religion which he had embraced. He did not, however, so completely gratify the wishes of his Christian subjects, as to abolish paganism. He, indeed, suppressed some of it's most exceptionable appendages, pillaged it's temples, and discountenanced it's votaries ; but he permitted the system to remain.

The example of the sovereign, and the invigorated zeal of the Christian preachers, rapidly extended, in all parts of the empire, the triumphs of the cross. That influence which had been privately exercised, was now sanctioned by the civil power, and confirmed by public favor ; and a regular hierarchy was established.

At the time of this memorable change, Sylvester presided over the church of Rome. The catholics reckon this prelate as the thirty-fourth of their pontiffs, beginning the series from the apostle Peter, who, they affirm, gave the supremacy to their church. This assertion may be reasonably controverted ; and, even if it be true, that distinguished preacher of the Gospel never authorised his successors to corrupt the faith, or to propagate superstitious innovations over the Christian world.

With regard to the time when bishops first appeared in the church, there are doubts among ecclesiastical historians. They seem to have been the same with presbyters, in the apostolic age : for each presbyter or priest had a congregation, of which he was the supervisor or inspector, according to the import of the episcopal designation. In the progress of conversion and the consequent multiplication of churches, it became expedient to subject several congregations, not indeed to arbitrary supremacy, but to the moderate control of a respectable presbyter, who thus acquired, with the title of bishop, a superiority of rank and dignity over the order to which he belonged. When points of general concern were to be decided, and new regulations seemed requisite, the bishops, priests, and

deacons, held a convention or synod, in which, in concert with the laic deputies of different congregations, they provided for the good government of the ecclesiastical body, and studiously promoted the interest of Christianity.

The bishops were chosen both by the clergy and laity of the churches which composed the diocese. They confirmed those who had been baptised, ordained the ministers of the Gospel, and enjoined penance for sins. Even the bishop of Rome had no higher authority than other episcopal dignitaries; and, when Victor pretended to excommunicate some of the prelates of Asia, they treated his attempt as an arrogant encroachment upon their privileges.

When Constantine protected, elevated, and aggrandised the church, he established patriarchs and metropolitans for it's general government, and favored them with great privileges. The former had the appointment of the latter; and, while one had the right of summoning a synod of the whole *diocese*, understood in the comprehensive sense of a great division of each præfecture, the second dignitary was authorised to convene a provincial meeting, and to act as president or moderator on the solemn occasion; and no ecclesiastic could obtain the episcopate, unless the metropolitan confirmed or approved the election.

The bishop of Rome then became a metropolitan; but he did not obtain the patriarchal dignity before the convocation of the fourth general council. The first œcumenical assembly was that of Nice\*, at which 318 bishops and 1730 inferior ministers were present. It was convoked by an imperial edict, not by the authority of Sylvester; and Constantine felt himself so interested in the result of the meeting, that he personally attended the discussions, without, however, assuming the authority of

\* In the year 325, or (by some accounts) 325.

a president. The council condemned the Anti-Trinitarian doctrine of Arius, and asserted the complete consubstantiality of the Father and the Son.

Constantine, while he lamented the progress of ecclesiastical dissension, was not at first disposed to be a persecutor of heretics. He exhorted those who differed on doctrinal points to argue without passion or animosity, and maintain concord and friendship; but the zeal of the bishops urged him to support the cause of orthodoxy, by the punishment of audacious sectaries. Thus influenced, he banished Arius and his most distinguished partisans, and commanded that unreserved obedience should be paid to the decrees of the Nicene council: but he afterward recalled the exiles, protected the heresiarch, and banished Athanasius, the strenuous defender of the Trinity.

While this question roused all the asperity of controversy, the schism of the Donatists also cherished the animosity of contest. This division of sentiment had arisen in Africa, during the late persecution, from the acquiescence of the less resolute Christians in the demand of a surrender of all copies of the holy Scripture,—a compliance which exposed them to the animadversions and reproaches of the high-spirited members of the community. Cæcilianus, having been ordained by a prelate to whom that act of mean submission was imputed, was deposed by a Numidian synod from the episcopal dignity; but, when the dispute had been referred to Constantine, he convoked a council at Rome; and the result of the inquiry was the restoration of the bishop, whose chief accuser Donatus was stigmatised as a calumniator. This decision was not so satisfactory as to obtain universal assent; and the Donatists continued to elect their own prelates, instead of concurring in the acceptance of those who were chosen by the rest of the African Christians, and acknowledged by the majority of the emperor's sub-



jects. The schism was not extinguished for some centuries; and it sensibly impaired, in the eyes of the world, the dignity of the church and the authority of its ministers.

Neither the arguments of the catholics, nor the terrors of punishment, could annihilate the Arian heresy. Athanasius, being recalled by the younger Constantine, displayed redoubled zeal in the support of the Nicene creed, and so offended the Arians by his conduct, that he was deposed from the see of Alexandria in an ecclesiastical meeting at Antioch: but, by a much more numerous council at Sardica, he was declared to be an innocent and orthodox prelate. As Julius, bishop of Rome, greatly pleased the majority, in this assembly, by his defence of Athanasius, all bishops who might in future be condemned in a provincial synod were allowed to appeal to his judgment or that of any of his successors; a concession which ought only to have proceeded from an œcumenical council. Liberius, the next Roman pontiff, was banished by Constantius for not assenting to the condemnation of Athanasius, and was not recalled and re-instated before he had made a courtly submission to the will of the Arian prince. Athanasius, after remaining for many years in concealment, resumed his episcopal functions with the consent of Julian, whose enmity, however, soon impelled him into another retreat, from which he emerged in the reign of Jovian.

An important law in favor of the church was promulgated by Constantius, who decreed that prelates should not be amenable to a civil tribunal, but should be tried for imputed offences by their own order. The piety of this prince prompted him to build and endow many churches; but he bestowed preferments upon the Arian clergy alone. He was a greater enemy to paganism than his father had been; for he shut up the temples, and endeavoured to abolish all remains of the ancient worship. Julian restored

that system, without being an actual persecutor of Christianity.

The heresy of Macedonius, bishop of Constantinople, sprang from Arianism: yet this prelate was deposed by the rigid Arians, who would not assent to the introduction of the less strict idea of a similarity of substance, in lieu of *consubstantiality*, although they agreed with him in denying the divinity of the Holy Ghost. In a general council which Theodosius convoked at Constantinople, the opinions of Macedonius were condemned in strong terms; and the heterodox notions of Apollinaris, who denied that Christ had either the soul or the rational faculty of man, were at the same time exploded. The emperor was as hostile to heretics as the most zealous of his prelates; and he punished offenders of that description with expulsion from their preferments, prohibited all their religious meetings, and obstructed their advancement in a civil capacity. Some, particularly the Manicheans<sup>5</sup>, were even menaced with death by express laws; but he was not so inhuman as to enforce these ordinances.

For the abolition of paganism throughout the empire, the memory of Theodosius claims praise rather than censure. A religion which, instead of repressing immorality, gave the reins to every inordinate passion and irregular propensity, did not deserve to be encouraged or maintained. Yet some moderation in the manner of suppressing a system which had subsisted for a long course of ages, would have been preferable to the violence with which it was exploded; and it may also be observed, that the rigorous treatment of those Christians, who merely differed from the prevailing party in doctrinal points, cannot be excused.

While the persecuting spirit of the clergy required a vigorous check, their rapacity was repressed by Theodo-

<sup>5</sup> Who believed in the existence of two eternal principles, and maintained that the evil one created the devil and the human body, while the good one formed the soul.

sus, who, in imitation of the prudence of Valentinian, prohibited all donations, either testamentary or immediate, from private individuals to the bishops or any other ecclesiastics. They continued, however, to court the rich, and to draw from them, by plausibility and artifice, the most valuable presents.

The prelate who filled the see of Rome during the greater part of the reign of this prince, was Symricus, who, beside his general zeal against heresy, particularly distinguished himself by enforcing celibacy among the clergy. This permanent chastity had been enjoined by the council of Elvira, about the beginning of the fourth century ; but the ordinance was disregarded, as unreasonably restrictive. The council of Neo-Cæsarea commanded the degradation of those priests who presumed to marry after their ordination ; and other ecclesiastical assemblies, about the time of Symricus, enacted a similar canon : but some centuries elapsed before this species of abstinence universally prevailed among the ministers of the church.

Symricus seems to have been the first who assumed the title of *pope*, or father, which his successors have invariably retained : but he did not claim that enormous extent of jurisdiction which subsequent popes gradually arrogated, as if, upon the visionary pretence of an apostolic grant, or because Rome was the imperial capital, the bishops of that city had a right to domineer over all the prelates and clergy of Christendom.

The church derived additional strength, if not dignity, from the monastic institution, which appears to have originated in Egypt. St. Jerome says, that John the Baptist was the first *monk* : but, although that celebrated precursor of Christianity mused in *solitude* upon the interesting concerns of religion, and preached in a wilderness, he did not institute a monastic order. Antony, a native of southern Egypt, conceiving that a retired life would be ex-



tremely favorable to the exercise of devotion, and that the sins committed in public and social life might be expiated by penance, self-denial, and abstinence, quitted the haunts of the busy world, and secluded himself in a desert. The fame of his piety drew many devotees to the place of his retreat; and, while he edified them by his precepts, he formed them into a holy fraternity<sup>6</sup>, subjected to precise rules. Pachomius followed his example, and prescribed rules for those Christians whom he had persuaded to devote themselves to seclusion. Hilarion recommended the same mode of life in Palestine; and Basil, before his talents and address raised him to the archiepiscopal dignity, organised a monastic establishment in the Pontic province. The same spirit of superstition rapidly spread over the empire, and withdrew myriads of subjects from the ordinary services and useful pursuits of assembled multitudes. At first, indeed, the monks were obliged to labor for their subsistence, and to build their own huts or cells; but the liberality of the opulent at length provided compact and commodious mansions for those who were weary of the world, and furnished them with the means of supporting life in pious indolence.

The practice of monastic seclusion was encouraged by the Roman pontiffs, who hoped to find, among the occupants of the new establishments, not only many warm friends of the church, but strenuous advocates of the papal pretensions. They were not disappointed in their expectations; for the zeal of the monks out-ran the discretion of the secular clergy.

Anastasius, who succeeded pope Symmachus, was more zealous than his predecessor in checking the growth of heresy; and Innocent was more inclined than either of those prelates to extend the authority of the holy see. He declared, that all the churches of the West were bound to follow the standard of the Roman establishment,

<sup>6</sup> Early in the fourth century.

both in doctrine and discipline, because the purest system, founded upon Scripture and authentic tradition, prevailed in that church. He also claimed the right of deciding, without appeal, all disputes in ecclesiastical concerns, however remote might be the diocese in which they occurred. This unjustifiable claim was not admitted by the bishops; but it served as a guide to future pontiffs, and formed a step which tempted them to ascend, until they attained an exorbitant degree of authority.

The chief employment of Zosimus, during his short pontificate, was the repression of the Pelagian heresy, which involved a denial of the necessity of baptism and of grace for a true Christian, and an extension of the idea of free-will beyond the limits usually assigned to it. He not only condemned these notions as impious and abominable, but, in a partial council, deposed many prelates who refused to concur in his decision. Augustin, one of the most distinguished fathers of the church, eagerly promoted the condemnation of Pelagianism; but, when he endeavoured at different times to explain his own sentiments, it was not easy to discover their precise import and tendency: yet he appears to have been a strong predestinarian.

The third general council distinguished the papacy of Celestine. It was convoked at Ephesus, in consequence of the heresy of Nestorius, who denied that the virgin Mary was the mother of God, and (in the words of an old record) "divided Jesus Christ into two persons<sup>7</sup>." For these opinions, the accused prelate was deposed; and Theodosius the Younger, confirming the sentence, ordered him to retire into a monastery: but his arbitrary and malignant enemy, Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, not content with the infliction of this disgrace, prevailed upon the

<sup>7</sup> This was merely a dispute about words; for he allowed that Mary was the mother of Christ, whose human nature he wished to distinguish from his divine essence.

emperor to banish him to an inhospitable spot; and his death was accelerated by harsh and injurious treatment. His fate would have been more generally commiserated, if he had not, in his prosperity, been a persecutor of heretics.

During the pontifical sway of Leo the Great, the Manicheans were exposed to the vengeance of the church. The pope considered them as abominable heretics; alleging that, in their two principles, they favored the doctrine of two independent deities, and that their practices were scandalously immoral. They were therefore stigmatised as sacrilegious delinquents, and treated as outlaws. The sect from that time declined: yet it continued to subsist for some centuries.

The Eutychian heresy also excited the indignation of Leo, who was as much shocked at the idea of an unity of nature in the person of Christ, as Celestine had been disgusted at the opposite opinion of Nestorius. In the fourth general council (which met at Chalcedon), the sentiments of Eutyches formed the chief subject of discussion and debate; and the assembly pronounced an anathema against the heretical doctrine.

Of the four œcumenical councils which I have mentioned, the dogmas and decrees were long regarded with profound reverence by those who aspired to the praise of orthodoxy; and some churchmen of high fame, particularly Gregory the Great and St. Isidore, did not scruple to declare, that even the holy Scriptures were not more worthy of attention, respect, and observance: but such is not the opinion of any modern divine who aims at purity of doctrine.



## LETTER XXX.

*Miscellaneous Observations relative to ROME and it's Dependencies, from the Death of AUGUSTUS to the Ruin of the WESTERN EMPIRE.*

THAT hardihood and energy of character which the famed republic had displayed, seemed to be seriously impaired, while the base voluptuary who succeeded Augustus exercised his degrading tyranny over the extensive dominions that acknowledged the authority of Rome. Luxury had made great advances; and, among a very considerable portion of the community, the love of pleasure had superseded that strict regard which was due to probity and virtue, and weakened that sense of patriotism by which the citizens had formerly been animated. In the progress of imperial sway, the seat of government became a nursery of corruption and depravity. Every species of vice seemed to thrive, as in a hot-bed, with rank luxuriance; and the vilest plants, or the most noxious weeds, had a super-abundant vegetation. A repugnance to glaring excess was ridiculed as a want of taste and of spirit; and the most vicious propensities were freely indulged, without exciting the asperity of censure or impressing the stigma of disgrace.

The arts and occupations which were subservient to luxury, were cultivated with zeal and diligence, if not with the most refined taste. The exorbitant desires of the opulent called every art into assiduous practice; and all parts of the empire contributed to feed the luxury of the metropolis. A variety of gratifications, which encouraged industry in every form, might not have been particularly detrimental or fatally pernicious to the state, if an inordinate desire of indulgence had not gradually diffused it-

self among all classes of people. Patrician excess was comparatively innocent in its consequences; but military and plebeian luxury proved highly injurious to the dignity, honor, welfare, and stability of the empire.

So numerous and splendid were the establishments of the rich, that strangers conceived very high ideas both of individual and national opulence. Spacious and magnificent mansions, partly built of the finest marble, decorated with painting and sculpture, furnished with warm and cold baths, and abounding with conveniences of almost every description<sup>1</sup>, embellished the imperial city and the chief provincial towns. The walls of some of the apartments, and the floors of the baths, were adorned with mosaic work, or an ingenious arrangement of pieces of colored marble, in imitation of nature or of the admired performances of painters. This practice was borrowed from the Greeks; but Roman artists at length excelled in it<sup>2</sup>.

In the fabrication of the furniture of these mansions, the two most valuable metals were frequently and ostentatiously employed. They entered into the composition of the chairs and tables, the bedsteads, the drinking-vessels, the plates, and other articles of domestic convenience. Being also used for the decoration of apparel, they concurred with precious stones in giving to the human form an imposing air of splendor. Coaches or chariots of silver were occasionally exhibited; and Poppæa, the wife of Nero, shod her favorite horses with the same metal<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> There was one convenience of which the houses were destitute in the reigns of the earlier emperors;—namely, that of glass windows. A kind of transparent stone was used as a substitute. From the remains of glass found at Herculaneum, it has been supposed by some antiquaries, that windows were formed of that material in (or before) the reign of Titus; while others maintain, that, though glass was sometimes used as an ornamental covering of the walls of apartments, it was not applied to windows before the fourth century.

<sup>2</sup> Many curious specimens of mosaic or tessellated pavements are preserved in different parts of Europe.

<sup>3</sup> *Phil. Hist. Nat. lib. xxxiii.*

A Roman citizen, in estimating his wealth, did not fail to reckon his slaves, who were not merely subservient to his pride, but exercised, for his use and benefit, almost every species of art and manufacture. An individual patrician, in the progress of accumulation, could sometimes command the services of 4000 of these unfortunate *objects of oppression*<sup>4</sup>; and some had even a greater number. To the ordinary slaves, in imitation of the Oriental custom, eunuchs were added; and a princely appearance seemed thus to be given to the establishments of the rich.

As masters had slaves, so patrons had clients. As early as the time of Romulus, that practice of dependence commenced, which, in multiplied instances, bound the plebeians to the patricians. In return for protection, advice, and forensic interposition, the clients gave personal aid and occasional service. These connexions became less strong under the imperial sway than they had been under the republican government, as the citizens of all classes were then more dependent upon the prince. Despots are usually jealous of the prevalence of such associations.

While the Romans rioted in luxury, they still attended to literature, and professed a regard for science. They still boasted of their orators, poets, and historians, and affected to devote themselves to one of the four principal sects of Grecian philosophy. The system of Epicurus seemed to have the preference among them: but those who aimed at refinement, expressed their predilection for Platonism; the admirers of just ratiocination ranged themselves under the standard of Aristotle; and the few ostensible votaries of rigid virtue dignified themselves with the appellation of Stoics. A philosopher of the last description distinguished himself by adding to the respectability of the sect. I allude to Epictetus, whose ethics bear a

4 Slaves might still be so termed even after Hadrian had imparted to them the protection of the law, by depriving their masters of the power of putting them to death.



strong affinity to the purity of Christian morals. The emperor Marcus Aurelius was likewise an illustrious Stoic; and his *Meditations* afford proofs of his good sense and discernment.

A new philosophical fraternity, founded upon a selection of the most approved opinions of former sects, flourished under the imperial government. It was principally formed by Ammonius, and received the denomination of the Eclectic sect. Plotinus was one of the most celebrated members of this association, to which the apostate Julian also belonged. It originated in a laudable motive and a just desire of excellence; but it may be doubted whether it proved beneficial to society. The selection was not very judicious; the borrowed tenets were distorted; and confusion, rather than order and coherence, prevailed in the boasted system.

It is not easy to determine to what class of philosophers Apollonius of Tyana belonged. He seemed, in some respects, to be a Pythagorean: but he ought to have been despised as an impostor, rather than revered as a sage. He was deemed, by the vulgar, a prophet and a magician; and even many of the Eclectics admired him as a man of profound sagacity and wisdom. Miracles were ascribed to him; and temples were erected to his honor.

Lucian was a general philosopher, not the follower of any particular sect. He ridiculed, with pleasantry and humor, the gross absurdities of the pagan theology, and was therefore decried as a profane and impious writer: but his works are still read, because they are recommended by the graces of style, and are both entertaining and instructive.

Apuleius, like Lucian, was a philosopher and a satirist: he was also a reputed magician. He favored the Platonic doctrines, but did not illustrate them with profound ability, or enforce them with remarkable success. Another eminent follower of Plato was Philo, the Jew, who endea-

voured to amalgamate the Grecian philosophy with the Mosaic theology. Porphyry was still more distinguished in the philosophic department, and was a more strenuous opposer of Christianity.

In scientific pursuits, the provincials of Greece continued to excel the other subjects of the empire. Astronomy was chiefly cultivated by the professors of the Alexandrian school, who were either native Greeks or of Grecian origin. Ptolemy, who flourished in the reign of Hadrian, was considered as an improver of this science; but his system of the universe was not erected upon that basis which modern philosophers have pronounced to be the most correct. From his own observations or conjectures, he concluded that the earth remained motionless in the centre, and that the sun and other heavenly bodies moved round it from east to west, once in every day, under the direction of an original impelling power. He developed his ideas in an important work, which was greatly admired by the ancients. His catalogue of the stars, and his tables of the planetary motions, were deemed more accurate than those of Hipparchus. He also illustrated geography with greater ability and accuracy than his predecessors had displayed, and gave to that pursuit a more scientific form.

Few distinguished astronomers or mathematicians arose between the time of Ptolemy and the subversion of the western empire. The observers of the stars were content to follow the course which he had pointed out; and the skill of the geometricians did not surpass the attainments of Euclid.

Natural history, in it's most extensive range, was developed by the elder Pliny, who, from a copious mass of published materials, compiled an interesting account of the general state of knowlege. Many errors and mis-statements occur in his great work: but it must be allowed, that he was a man of learning and talent. He fell a victim

to philosophical curiosity, being suffocated by the effusions of Mount Vesuvius, during that calamitous eruption which occurred in the reign of Titus.

The medical science received occasional improvements. When the reputation of Asclepiades had declined, Themison acquired high fame. The former, who flourished before the usurpation of Augustus, was at first a rhetorician; but, not finding that profession so lucrative as he expected, he began to act as a physician, without that preparatory study which the employment required. By humoring the fancies of his patients, recommending gentle exercise and friction, administering pleasant instead of nauseous medicines, and avoiding the use of violent emetics and cathartics, he introduced himself into general practice; but it may be doubted whether he had sufficient skill for the cure of dangerous disorders. His pupil, Themison, following what he conceived to be a more methodical, regular, and rational system, became founder of the society or class of Methodists, who divided the profession with the Dogmatists and Empirics. Celsus, who lived in the reign of Tiberius, endeavoured to revive the Hippocratic modes of practice, and, in an elegant work, gave accurate descriptions of diseases, and pointed out the best remedies. Thessalus, who practised under the government of Nero, was not destitute of sagacity or of skill; but his excessive vanity, and rage for innovation, derogated from his merit<sup>5</sup>. Galen, a Pergamene provincial, at length appeared, whose success in some remarkable cases subjected him to a suspicion of magic. He professed himself an admirer of Hippocrates, but did not think that he was bound to follow even that great physician in every point of practice. He was a good anatomist, and was well

<sup>5</sup> Pliu, Hist. Nat. lib. xxvi.

<sup>6</sup> He called himself the conqueror of physicians, because, as far as his influence extended, he subverted their maxims and defeated the force of their authority.



acquainted with the medicinal uses of herbs and roots; but, when he pretended to cure epileptic patients, by putting roots of peony round their necks, he trusted more to fancy than to reason or judgement. Among his patrons were the emperors Aurelius and Verus; but all the encouragement which he received at Rome, did not prevent him from returning to his native city, where he died at an advanced age. His authority was long honored with regard. We do not hear of any remarkable advance in medical knowledge from this time to the fall of the empire; but some eminent men occasionally adorned the profession, so as to preclude a very pernicious failure of skill and ability.

If fewer symptoms of decline appeared in the healing art than in some other pursuits, the difference may be chiefly attributed to its more obvious utility. Philosophy, erudition, and the polite arts, manifestly declined in the second century, in consequence of that degeneracy and depravity which almost universally attended the imperial despotism.

Oratory could not flourish with such vigor under tyrannic sway as it did when freedom of speech was allowed in the senate, and when the people had a share in the government. Being chiefly confined to the courts of judicature, it exchanged its dignified energy for inelegance, coarseness, and vulgarity. Quintilian gave judicious rules for the attainment of oratorical excellence; but his instructions had not that commanding efficacy which could re-establish a declining art.

The poets of the Augustan age were feebly or imperfectly imitated by those who courted the Muses in the subsequent reigns. Poetic genius, indeed, was not extinct; but it did not shine with the same dignity, spirit, or elegance. Some of the friends of Lucan thought him equal to Virgil; while more judicious critics maintained, that, between the *Pharsalia* and the *Æneid*, the disparity was

striking. Statius, in his *Thebaid*, aspired to the fame of an epic poet ; and Silius Italicus endeavoured to derive the same honorable distinction from his labours in versifying the history of the second Punic war. Both these bards wrote with harmonious elegance ; and their poems may be read with pleasure. Statius had a greater degree of animation and warmth ; while Silius was rather coldly correct than spirited or sublime.

Contemporary with Lucan was Persius, a votary of the Stoic philosophy, whose satires betray, in general, a harsh and uncouth diction, but are recommended by strength of observation and justness of sentiment. In the same period flourished Seneca, not less known as a moral writer than as the minister of Nero. His epistles and essays abound with the rules of prudence and the dictates of wisdom ; and, while we are instructed by his suggestions and remarks, we lament the fate of this victim of flagitious tyranny.

Under the degrading despotism of Domitian, Juvenal, the satiric poet, ventured to write with honest freedom and indignant severity. Being honored rather than punished by exile, he returned after the elevation of Nerva and exposed with sarcastic asperity the degeneracy of Roman manners, and the profligacy of the late reign.

Of the poets who subsequently arose within the wide extent of the empire, it is not necessary to particularise every one. Valerius Flaccus was merely an humble imitator of Apollonius the Rhodian. Oppian claims transient notice, not because he was admired and patronised by the barbarian Caracalla, but in consideration of the beauties which appear in his poems upon hunting and fishing. Ausonius, the tutor of the emperor Gratian, was not a contemptible poet ; but his works betray a decline of the Roman genius and language. Claudian, who owed his birth to Egypt, gave some lustre to the reign of Honorius

by the fanciful elegance and occasional spirit of his poems, in which, however, the *mens divini* is rarely displayed.

Among the historians who dignified the imperial government, some distinguished names may be found. Diodorus the Sicilian, and Dionysius the Halicarnassian, were men of ability and research. The former illustrated general history; while the latter confined himself to the politics, warfare, and institutions of Rome. Tacitus had a more intimate knowledge of human nature than either of those historians, and a more enlarged and philosophical mind. He has been accused of a malignant propensity to the assignment of bad motives for human actions; but the charge will not seem to be altogether just, when the general depravity of the age in which he lived is taken into consideration. The style of this author is pointed and energetic: he expresses his ideas with conciseness and force; his descriptions are vivid, and his observations are acute. His friend, the younger Pliny, may be called the historian of Trajan; for his panegyrical discourse exhibits the features of legitimate history. Josephus, the Jewish historian, must not pass, on this occasion, without honorable notice; for he may be considered as an intelligent and interesting writer. Suetonius has described the actions and vices of the twelve Cæsars with ability and accuracy; but his details of their sensual indulgences and vicious gratifications are disgusting and offensive. Plutarch's biographical accounts of eminent Greeks and Romans are amusing and instructive, as are also his moral and miscellaneous works. Arrian's history of the reign of Alexander the Great reflects credit upon the author, both for style and statement; and the remaining parts of the copious work of Dio Cassius, notwithstanding various proofs of partiality and some instances of absurdity, are worthy of attentive perusal. Herodian seems to have aimed at fidelity of narration; and his mode of writing is calcu-



lated to please. As a miscellaneous author, Macrobius may be commended: from his *Saturnalia*, in particular, much entertainment may be derived; and the perusal, at the same time, will not be unproductive of utility. He flourished in the reign of Honorius, when the literary horizon was evidently obscured. The want of political energy and of military vigor, and the general relaxation of manners, then portended the decline of the empire, exhibiting symptoms which could not be misunderstood; and barbarism approached with a menacing aspect and with hasty strides.

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## ERRATA.

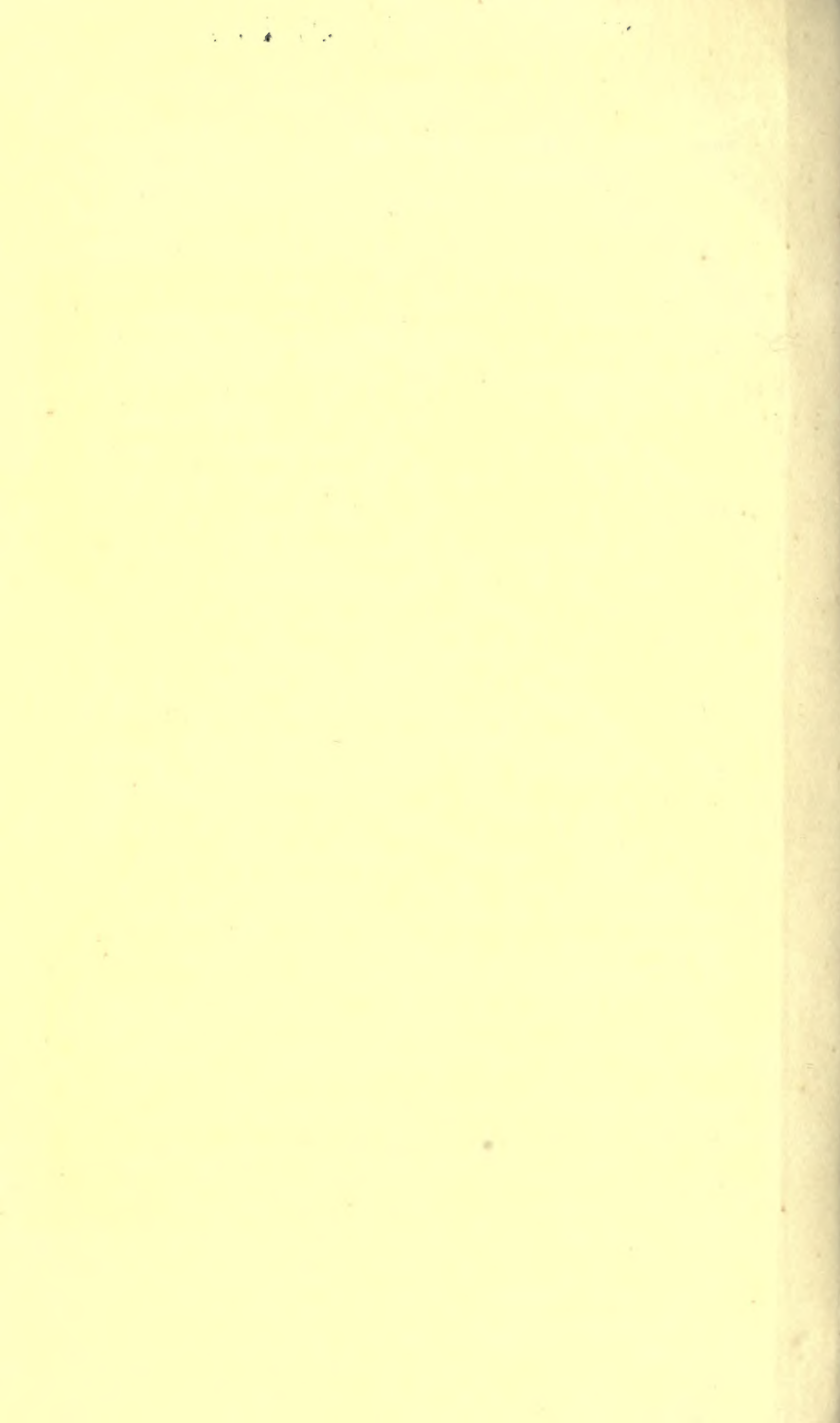
Vol. I. p. 104, l. 19, dele *Messenian* before *victors*.

p. 439, note 23, for *sun*, read *sunt*.

p. 458, l. 14, for *other*, read *various*, before *observances*.







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